

# The SMART SET

Edited by  
George Jean Nathan  
and  
H.L. Mencken.



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AND

HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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# The SMART SET

The  
Aristocrat  
Among  
Magazines



## A Litany for Bibuli

*By Major Owen Hatteras*

FROM bad gin at \$95 a case and from bootleggers who promise to dig up some genuine Rhine wine and are then never heard of again; from home-brewed ale with a faint, cyanotic flavour of dishwater and from home-brewed ale with so much steam in it that it squirts all over the ceiling when the bottle is opened; from old family brandy that has been lying in the wood since 1867 and that now tastes like coffin-varnish or Jap-a-lac and from vermin who invite one to dinner parties in remote suburbs, promising leeringly to get one stewed, and then turn out to have nothing on tap save a quart of drug-store rye whiskey and two bottles of American curaçao; from fat hostesses who insist upon mixing the cocktails and manage to get at least 75% of melted ice into every one; from louts who call one up by telephone at midnight to report that 20 cases of vermouth have

just been smuggled ashore from an Italian ship, and who report the next morning that the captain has been jailed and the vermouth seized by revenue agents who demand \$6 a bottle for it; from liars who circulate the false news that Scranton, Pa., is still as wet as Hoboken ever was, and who thus tout for the hotels of the town, and break many a trusting heart; from bores who have just returned from Havana, and complain that they drank so much Scotch at 30 cents a drink that they have now been ordered on the water-wagon by the life insurance companies; from idiots who know where authentic Lacrimae Christi is to be had down in Greenwich Village at \$1.25 a quart, and who discover, after hauling one about in a taxicab for three hours, that the place closes at 6 P.M.; from home-made wines made of dandelions, elderberries and other such garbage, recommended for the stom-



ach by grandmothers too respectable to be handed over to the police; from barbarians who invite one to dinner and then serve only *one* cocktail; from Presidential candidates who run as wets in New York and as drys in Elyria, Ohio; from police sergeants in small towns who volunteer to show one where to get a safe drink at \$7 a pint, and then guzzle half the bottle in lieu of a *pourboir*; from members of the Elks who manage to get beautifully snooted every night, but always keep sober enough to avoid telling one where they get it; from cuties who go with one to studio parties, and horn into the gin with such voracity that the host gets cold feet and begins to hide his reserve stock; from old friends who betray the confidence of years and shame the Christian religion by trying to deceive one with grape-juice reinforced with 6% of denatured al-

cohol; from Herbert Kaufman, who lets it be whispered that he has 3,000 bottles of Culmbacher cachéd in Tarrytown, and then never invites one out to see his collection of Cézannes; from the kind of Scotch bootlegged by one of the embassies in Washington, and from San Francisco grappo; from moonshine corn whiskey, two days old, at \$30 a gallon, and from Prohibition spies who agree to get one a case of genuine Chambertin for \$27, and then try to palm off a case of corked California Barbera; from non-alcoholic vermouth and from synthetic Dubonnet; from near-beer reinforced by the addition of a cake of yeast to every *Achtel*; from hard cider that turns out to be full of salicylic acid and from absinthe in bottles showing the coat-of-arms of the Glassblowers' Union of Allentown, Pa.—good Lord, deliver us!



## The Captive

By Jessie B. Rittenhouse

ONLY a day ago, it seems,  
The world was a wide, wide place  
And all my thoughts could wander far  
On the four winds of space.

But now my thoughts are captive birds  
That have no will for flight,  
You shut them fast within your heart  
All on a summer night!





# The Descent into Avernus

[A Complete Novelette.]

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

## CHAPTER I

IN the motor, on the way to Pauline Welsh's gaudily celebrated Long Island estate, Peter Crane did his best to appear of a commendable seriousness. After all, since Seymour had put him on his honor to behave with discretion, it would be rather a breach of faith to take the expedition as a rip-roaring lark and nothing more. Crane, as he lounged beside his cousin, went over in his mind last night's exhortations.

"I have the greatest respect for Pauline," Seymour had said. "You Cranes are malignant snobs; the poor girl would make succulent prey, of course. Well, I don't intend that she *shall*. You've got to promise you'll take her as a charming little thing and find excuses for her faults and crudities; otherwise I shall go alone."

Crane had promised; and, this morning, he honestly meant to stick to his vow. The demon of irony betrayed him, however, the moment they had swung past the ornate gate-house and under the towering entrance-arch of marble and bronze.

"I feel faint," Crane moaned, "and miserably nervous. How *does* one greet a tin-plate princess?"

He didn't wait for an answer; at that moment, far away above the massed verdure he had perceived a high gold dome that the sun smote to a barbaric radiance.

"Oh, my God!" He put a hand to his eyes. "Does she live under that in

summer? Doesn't it ever melt and come trickling down all over one in big, oily, scalding drops? Or is it made of some indestructible sort of super-tin?"

Seymour couldn't help laughing.

"Be quiet, you swine!" he protested.

They swept around a bend of the drive and the dome sank out of sight.

"The approach is charming," Crane confessed. "The landscape gardener didn't prostitute his talents like one John Seymour."

Seymour shrugged.

"Well, maybe the house deserves all your sneers," he said. "You must give me a belly-full of them. As the architect, I deserve them, I suppose, for deliberately designing the damned thing, and for helping to cram its maw with tapestries by the ton and bric-à-brac by the van-load and French furniture enough to fill an ocean liner. Oh," he could wax extravagant at the vision, "it's a ghastly place, a rose-and-gilt what-is-it, a bog of upholstered muck. Crucify me for it, Peter, for heaven's sake; don't waste your sympathy on *me*! But I do ask you to study Pauline, to give her a fair show; the way she has of making one admire her in the midst of all the tawdry truck she dotes on is miraculous. She's a wonderful creature, there's no denying it. If you don't grow to respect her, it will prove to me that you *are* an idiot. Remember my warning: I don't intend to show her off for you like a circus-freak or an animal in a zoo."

The broad roadway resembled a tunnel cut through a stretch of forest. On



either side great trees reared their trunks with an effect majestically architectural, elaborately ordered. The park was a brilliant achievement, with its straight, gigantic columns and dim cathedral aisles. No limbs, sagging to the ground under a weight of foliage, confused the prospect.

The charm of space was everywhere preserved. Each trunk was like a monolith. The branches began high up and formed a rich, dense roof overhead. The greensward, dappled with yellow motes, invited to a meditative stroll. The light was a liquid, cloistral dusk suffused with gold. At intervals, clearings planted with flowering shrubs made patches of sheer, quivering brilliance.

"Of course it's expensively manicured," said Crane, "but it's beautiful."

Seymour sighed. "Yes, it is. The poor girl wanted a stupendous contrast, don't you see? Her idea was to get the eyes used to twilight and then—biff!—to flash on an insufferable light. Ingenious, you must grant!"

At one point, the drive swept steeply up a short, precipitous rise. A grotesque edifice capped the spot. Broad marble steps led from the roadway to the building itself. This was a ruinous Roman temple or pavilion, circular in shape, with the inevitable worm-eaten columns propping the heavy roof and with a wide balustrade to add a spurious touch. Owing to the position of the structure—it hung on the verge of an ugly abyss—the effect was one of conspicuous grandeur. At one spot, where the rock had been cut away beneath it, there was a straight, dizzying drop to the water that fretted and murmured at the base of the cliff.

Suddenly the motor rounded the top of a small eminence and without warning the park ended. They hung now at the rim of an immense cup-like depression in the land. Directly facing them, at the opposite edge of the amphitheatre, was Pauline's celebrated house; between were vast formal gardens.

Crane emitted a low whistle.

"Biff!—and yet once more, biff!" he exclaimed. "How it blares; how it trumpets—like a million brazen elephants!"

He paused.

"Do you know, the audacity of the thing is positively thrilling," he gasped out.

It was all a dazzling blur, a chaos of dewy beauties and ugly blots. The rank profusion of colour, the immensity of the flower-beds, the disordered array of marbles—fountains, benches, urns, groups of statuary—and the masses of tortured boxwood dizzied and well-nigh stunned the observer.

There was no relief anywhere one looked, except for one break in the hill through which a stretch of serene blue water was visible. The extravagant confusion quite robbed the genuinely lovely spaces of their charm. The eye would rest for a moment on delicate clouds of bloom as fragile, as exquisite as an arabesque, only to be diverted in a flash by the tiered terraces, with their glistening flights of steps and their piles of sculpture. The air was filled with the sparkle and shimmer of fountains; but even this lavish drenching of spray was ineffectual. It could not take from the spot its effect of throbbing, noontide heat and ferment.

The house itself loomed above the gardens and added the last prodigious note. It was a structure of magnificent boldness, a pile of pure white marble with an immense golden dome. Fanciful, slender minarets, by the dozen, it seemed, soared up from the roof; the edifice fairly bristled with them. The whole huge place was miraculously carved until it resembled more a fantastic piece of lace-work than a thing of stone. It was capricious, outlandish, and, as it flamed and glittered under the sun's rays, a torture to the eyes.

Crane winced, after his amazed survey, and blinked furiously.

"My eyelids are seered away and I hear tom-toms thumping," he intoned, as they drew up before the great bronze door. "Pauline will find Jerusalem the



Golden pretty anemic when she gets there!"

She was waiting for them in one of the cluttered drawing-rooms. The two men hesitated for a moment on the threshold, as if timorous of launching themselves into the sea of furniture that separated them from their hostess. Pauline looked diminutive, almost pathetic, as she stood under the crystal chandelier, with serried ranks of heroic couches and chairs of gigantic proportions shutting her off from them. She smiled cordially, held out a hand and waited for them to thread a furtive way to her.

Seymour ventured first, with Crane a few paces behind; theirs was a quaint progress—as if they were plunging through a morass, the younger man careful all the while to keep his shoes dry by stepping gingerly on the precise spots where his more experienced companion had planted his feet.

Pauline apparently did not go in for polite preludes to the actual business on hand; her first words to Crane were, "You like it?" spoken in a way to discourage subterfuge. She leveled upon him a frank, searching glance.

Crane was a match for her.

"It's marvelous—but so terrifying," he returned. "I feel that, if I once went under, I might never rise to the surface again. Catacombs are as nothing to your splendid intricacies."

Seymour, over Pauline's shoulder, elevated his brows warningly at his incorrigible cousin and shook a disapproving head. The silent precaution was quite unnecessary. The girl laughed out her delight. She had looked deep into Crane's candid eyes and had in a flash found herself believing in him.

"He *does* like it; he agrees with me!" She confronted Seymour triumphantly. "We're two against one."

The unfortunate architect, receiving at that moment a sly wink from Crane, stammered out a clumsy pleasantry and reflected silently that he wished he'd come alone.

Pauline turned to Crane.

"Of course you know Mr. Seymour's views. He's ashamed of himself for helping me do it. He's been telling you all the way from New York how crude and ugly the place is. That makes your liking it much jollier, doesn't it?" She laid a hand on the young man's arm. "It's my *life*," and she seemed to embrace the whole estate, to carry it to her maternal breast with her large gesture. "Can't we—you and I—win him to our way of thinking? Can't we persuade him? He's been very kind and thoughtful; no one else could have seen my ideas through so perfectly. And it hurts me to realize that he hates his handiwork, indeed it does. So you'll help me? We'll back each other up; perhaps we'll convince him!"

"My dear Pauline," Seymour protested, "I adore it. It's your baby—and a bouncing one—and I'm its godfather. Haven't I the right, loving it so, to admit I don't think it's beautiful?"

Pauline appealed to Crane. "If he really loved it, he would be blind to its faults, wouldn't he?"

"Ah, yes," Crane nodded. "If it had freckles or bowlegs he'd never notice 'em."

"Before luncheon I want to take you all over," Pauline told him. "I suppose I'm a fearful bore about it. I can't help that; and if I tire you out this time you won't come again. People never seem to mind hurting my feelings. Lots of them visit me once and look the ground over and then don't appear any more. Why should they? They just want to get a chance to make fun of me. Oh, I notice it in a minute. Would you believe a girl like me could be so dreadfully neglected? Too much money and too few friends!"

She broke off of a sudden and smiled at Seymour.

"Ah, but Mr. Seymour is so different from the others," she resumed. "He is frank with me—he tells me just what he thinks of my house and of me—but he's fond of me, don't you see, and that makes everything all right."

Once more she rested a hand on Crane's sleeve.



"I suspect you're like him, Mr. Crane," she announced. "If I get on your nerves, if you find you can't *stand* me, you'll promise to tell me? I should honestly prefer that to your just clearing out in a polite way and then failing to show up again. It's the gradual realization of somebody's desertion that I hate."

His only reply was his sweetest and most disarming smile.

Seymour had been watching the two narrowly. It had taken him but a few moments to perceive that the girl was charmed by Crane. She seemed reluctant to take her eyes from his face; throughout her eager harangue she had examined him with a nervous intensity, as if she were determined to test him and prove, for her satisfaction, whether or not a suggestion of subtle mockery marred his cordiality.

Pauline had long since been forced by her position to measure each newcomer as a possible opponent—of that Seymour was aware. She stood forever on her guard against covert jeers. All her life she had been exploited as the grotesquely, fabulously wealthy daughter of a man whose ignorance and vices and financial genius had been of so rich a strain as to leave a slimy trail over even his offspring.

Pauline faced the world alone and knew its hostility. Trained as she had been to an acceptance of jibes and bitter sneers, she yet could feel a despairing ache of sorrow and loneliness at the knowledge that there was nobody she could talk to of her father's redeeming tenderness for her or of her mother's tragic weakness.

Pauline had not seen her mother for ten years now; that fact was public property. Everything, indeed, in Mrs. Welsh's career of itinerant splendour was shared by her with the entire universe, from her newest frocks to her alcoholic cures. Seymour felt the deepest pity for Pauline as, making her direct appeal to Crane, she searched his face with a bewildered joy in the dawning conviction that at last she had met a man whom she could trust.

Without understanding why, the older man found himself scrutinizing his cousin's face with a stir of discouraged suspicion, with a keen pang of fear that he had never before known. At that moment the thought of Crane's easygoing weakness caused him a shiver of foreboding.

Peter stood there and submitted to the double examination without being in the slightest degree conscious of how intense a problem he offered for his companion's solution. Pauline was but too obviously stirred even now to a vivid response.

Seymour shut his eyes abruptly and, turning on his heel, pretended to look through a window at the gorgeous gardens. He had never been more miserable, more perplexed; the fact that his quick distrust amounted to an absurd, illogical disloyalty to the man he was fondest of didn't help him to throw off his depression.

"But you're both hot and dusty!" Pauline cut her revelations short and became on the instant the apologetic hostess. "You want to go to your rooms, of course. You're too polite!" She laughed. "I've given you connecting suites, so you can run in on each other and gossip about me."

"My poor cousin won't have a moment's rest," Crane remarked. "I'm the sort that makes informal visits at dawn, with a supply of cigarettes and a great fund of sprightly talk."

Seymour faced about. "He sleeps like the dead; nothing would ever tempt him to leave his warm bed. I shan't once be disturbed."

The veer to casual small talk had restored his equanimity. He could curse himself for a fool now at the recollection of the dismal interpretations he had put upon this first meeting between Crane and the notorious heiress.

"Please don't let yourselves be inveigled into the lift," Pauline called after them. "Go up the staircase; it gives you a bird's-eye view that I'm dreadfully proud of."



## CHAPTER II

FOR Crane, the visit proved of absorbing interest. It was strange, Pauline's power to dominate the scene, to occupy the center of the vast, heterogeneous stage. No matter how appallingly splendid, how crammed and choked with furniture the rooms might be that she occupied with her guests, she imparted somehow a unity to the welter. When the two men were alone they resembled a pair of frightened castaways on a raft, with little hope of rescue from the turbulent sea.

Pauline's appearance on the threshold seemed to change everything; it was almost as if she could smooth the waves and bring about a new reign of order. She could simplify, even though she couldn't, by her presence, convert the colour-schemes to a semblance of beauty or impart a pardonable excuse for the mixture of styles and periods. Her mastery over the disordered universe made manifest the fact that she, by her genius, had created it; that, in itself, was enough to evoke admiration. Perverse, tasteless as her establishment was, it yet bore witness to the vast scope and boldness of her vision. Pauline's imagination was indeed a thing of monstrous infelicities; but of its rank fertility there could be no doubt.

She had no notion of the selective instinct, no conception of artistic pruning. For her a chill, pure vista would have been quite meaningless. Perfection, in her eyes, meant a filling to the brim, a flowing over of a great receptacle with the colourful and the sumptuous. She had built a vast house and she had glutted it; therefore she loved it. Her standards were her own; and they were superbly definite. She knew and cherished every one of her myriad possessions. Each thing had its hallowed spot; no protestations would ever prevail on her to move an object a single inch.

It was only natural, therefore, that she should appear always on the crest of the gigantic wave, that she should exercise a sort of divine authority. For

her, the apparent chaos was an eternal order of her own compassing. It was her setting; it would have been other women's annihilation.

"You know," Crane confessed to Seymour, "it's all simply astounding. Fancy the queer little thing carrying through such a project! You've got to go back to ancient times to find the pat comparison; by jove, it suggests Dido building Carthage, damned if it doesn't! The impudence, the cheek of it! Nine girls out of ten would have captured their architects and decorators and told them to go right ahead. The result would have been beautiful, of course; but the poor dear owner would have drifted around in the most helpless, homeless daze imaginable. You know how it is with the unfortunate creatures. They're miserable, because they've been planted in alien soil. They can't find their way, they feel like intruders, and it's no consolation to realize they've achieved something rare when they couldn't for the life of them tell you *why*. But Pauline's control of things is stunning! You must have been like wax in her hands, John."

"Like wax," Seymour echoed. "Very clever, that about Dido. I only hope she'll never come a cropper against some handsome young Æneas."

Crane soon found himself regarding Pauline with a genuine enthusiasm. He had expected to find in the three days' sojourn more a gold-mine for future anecdotal needs than a present pleasure. A trip of inspection, it had promised to be, with the estate itself the main issue and the hostess merely a lay-figure lost in the confused labyrinth.

The early perception of how the diminutive Pauline dwarfed her surroundings put him quite off the track for a time. He hadn't reckoned on this; once he got to work on the new vein, however, he was immensely struck by its possibilities. Pauline herself was the principal study; her house came in for its share, to be sure, but only by reason of the light it cast on the figure of its mistress. His liking Pauline from the start complicated matters; it would have



been much more satisfying to formulate lampoons against somebody one detested.

The girl's beauty had at once stirred Crane's blood to a vaguely stinging warmth. The enervating spring months in town had left him jaded. It was Pauline's part to awaken him to a vigorous activity. He no longer felt lazy and out of sorts. The old sense of physical well-being had quickly reasserted itself. It was a decided pleasure just to look at her. Her features betrayed her vulgar lineage, but that somehow added to their charm.

She resembled her coarse old father, one couldn't deny it. Her nose was short and a trifle too broad, with a suggestion about it of plumpness. Fine noses, like Crane's own, have an effect on leanness. Pauline's was of the lumpy variety, but small enough to be very pretty, even though it could never be considered aristocratic. The nostrils were neither thin nor sensitive; they were wide, perpendicular slits—not the least bit like the delicate, horizontal lines in a face of conventional beauty—and they made it appear as if she were humourously drawing down her upper lip. As a result the nose, which was really straight, seemed audaciously snub. Her mouth was of a generous size, but not large; it was expressive, the curve of the lips firm and full, the colour a moist, vivid red. The chin had an inflexible boldness and precision of line.

It was Pauline's eyes that transfigured her. They were of a deep, sombre brown, shot through with a clear beam from within that made them darkly luminous. All the tragedy and loneliness of her lot were in them. Despite the rich sumptuousness of their colour, they had a miraculous purity and candour. One could read her nature by them. They seemed to let the observer into her soul; they concealed nothing.

Crane, gazing at her, was moved ever and again to a generous pity, with an accompanying remorse that he couldn't for the life of him analyze. Pauline's eyes were certainly not a heritage from her father. They redeemed her other

features from the latent sensuality that had been his gift.

Crane could picture to himself the terrible light of despair and accusation they would flash on any man who might have betrayed her into surrender. He was powerless to get rid of the idea. It obsessed him, conscious as he was of the girl's inevitable inheritance, from her disreputable parents, of weakness and passion. Her eyes wouldn't have possessed that anguished beauty if she had been removed from danger. The struggle must come some day; he wondered intensely what the result would be.

"She's an ardent little devil—one can see that," he told Seymour. "Where did she get those saint-eyes? They're like two guardian angels put there to watch over her. They're Conscience visible!"

"Yes, thank God!" Seymour returned with a fervour almost melodramatic. "They're the only things between her and perdition, I've often thought."

On the surface, the visit seemed delightfully jolly and matter-of-fact. The three of them had a busy time of it. Pauline was determined that Crane should see everything; it would have struck her as an act of positive treachery had a single one of her treasures been overlooked—almost as if a mother had neglected to dandle one of the children in her nursery before the eyes of a privileged guest.

Crane's sly enthusiasms, that jarred on Seymour's sense of the fit and the honourable, delighted Pauline. By an uncharacteristic failure of perception, she had welcomed Crane in a flash as a man of transparent candour, as a person upon whom she could rely. She accepted his running-fire of comments without the slightest suspicion of a "double entendre." Seymour had soon perceived how out of it he was. His two companions were absorbed in each other. Pauline, charmed, eager, vivacious, was drawn by an irresistible attraction. It would have caused her a keen pang of contrition if she had realized for a moment the quite obvious way in which she forgot the very existence of her faithful and distinguished



guest. Held by Crane's fascination, she would time and again leave Seymour's occasional queries unanswered, for the simple reason that she hadn't known he had spoken to her.

Nothing escaped Peter, however; he noted Pauline's unconscious rudeness and got to the full the predicament of poor Seymour. In a desultory way, he would attempt to draw the architect into the current—it was a shame to see him high and dry—but his efforts were not heroic. They turned out pretty consistently abortive and Crane couldn't help confessing to himself that he was damned glad they did. He wanted, during these days, to saturate himself, to get Pauline in all her aspects. When he returned to New York he'd sift and strain and search; he'd determine then (to use her terrible father's vernacular) whether or not the claim merited a working.

Anything like a lasting intimacy he considered out of the question. The thing might progress after the usual fashion, might perhaps have its moments of delicious ardour; but it could never have for either of them the quality of importance or permanence. He knew nothing of Pauline's life; he reflected, however, that a girl of her type must have been involved in dozens of flirtations, must possess sufficient sophistication to keep her head. It was only at rare intervals that he glimpsed in her a disturbing, childlike trust, a possible innocence of a sort that would make even the most inoffensive meddling both perplexing and perilous.

At such times, he resolved to clear out forthwith. He didn't relish an entanglement from which it would be painful to extricate himself; moreover, he was essentially gentle and he hated the thought of causing the girl pain. In the past his genial weakness had precipitated more than one crisis that had resulted, on his side, in sorry treachery. The acute suffering that the acts of disloyalty had caused him had yet never hindered him from emerging with a whole skin. Something stronger than the lovable side of his nature had in every case

asserted itself and driven him to the brutal severance.

It was as if he had no power to combat the instinct of self-protection. He would strike out blindly, shake off the soft shackles and then give way to the blackest horror of self-loathing. No man had ever experienced more bitter and even maudlin remorse than this gay and affable Crane; with him, however, the mood of repenting was unavailing. It left no mark upon him; it did not bring about any growth toward a saving self-knowledge. He was buoyant and irresponsible. The cloud of depression would of a sudden lift and leave him quite unaltered.

He had soon decided that it was preposterous to give way to scruples in regard to Pauline. She certainly wouldn't thank him for harbouring them! It was obvious that she was out for a lark. His defection would be merely a breach of the amenities.

On the Monday, when the two men were taking leave, Pauline remarked, "It's been so jolly. Do come again. Shall I count on you both for next Friday?"

Seymour shook his head to indicate a sad renunciation.

"Impossible! This jaunt has left me hideously in arrears. I dread to face the pile of work that's before me."

"Ah—I'm sorry."

Pauline showed her genuine disappointment. She was silent for a moment; evidently, as she stood there, she weighed the situation. Then, turning to Crane, she ventured it. "Will you come, Mr. Crane? I don't care a rap about the gossips. People talk about me anyhow, whether I give them cause or not; so I'm really at liberty to do as I please. I suppose that's partly why I'm so clever about looking after myself. Will you come? I should like it so much."

Crane, bending over her hand, felt it tremble in his own.

"It will be splendid," he returned, with an earnestness that this time had, for Seymour, no message of good-humoured raillery.

Pauline attempted a light tone.



"I'm an ignorant person. Would it be too dreadful? Perhaps I'd better find three or four others. The trouble is, you wouldn't *like* them."

"Oh, please don't!" Crane begged. "By actual arithmetic, one man is just half as compromising as two—particularly when the subtracted fellow happens to be the notorious John Seymour."

She laughed. "But if you can possibly make it, Mr. Seymour, you will? Don't bother even to wire—"

In the motor, Seymour faced Crane with an unwonted severity.

"You'll send your regrets, of course—and at once, Peter. She doesn't know what's proper, what people who haven't her decency call decent. There's no possible excuse for taking advantage of her ignorance."

Crane smiled enigmatically.

"You're a fairy godmother in trousers," he remarked. "But don't worry. I promise to get out of it, John."

### CHAPTER III

DESPITE his assurances to Seymour, Crane made no attempt to break the engagement.

Friday found him at the Long Island estate. He had by that time arrived at very definite conclusions, so far as Pauline was concerned, and in a good many respects his impressions of the past week had undergone a change. She was a lovely little thing and he liked her; physically, she could communicate a sharp thrill—"the true *frisson*," as he phrased it. Apart from that—indeed, her attitude might be construed as a tacit confession—she couldn't expect to count with men of aristocratic standards. She was just a rather touching, middle-class figure, with unfortunate limitations that she herself was aware of.

For her, Crane decided, any attention would be in the nature of a wonderful flattery; he might take any liberty and she would regard it as homage. This attitude on Crane's part resulted, not from any exalted pride in his own powers, but from a shrewd suspicion of the

handicaps inevitable to the girl's lot and her status in society. Any chap of a particularly favoured position in the world would have her at his mercy. Crane had often been able to test, by his own experience, the rich newcomer's acceptance of the axiom that people with family and traditions are immune from ordinary rules and must be conciliated in their most brutal exactions. Wasn't Pauline's own mother a case in point? Hadn't she sacrificed everything and become shamelessly, clamorously a victim to this social law?

Well, Crane pitied Pauline and had already a kind of fondness for her. He would therefore take no liberties. He would be unable to lose the sense, however, of some other chap's opportunity. It all came down to one thing: whatever the girl's admirable qualities, she could never count, because her position made her a helpless and certain victim. A girl who is abnormally rich and of vulgar stock is—unjustly, unpardonably, to be sure—almost on the same footing as a woman of the half world in the estimation of the men higher up in the scale. Crane had taken this for granted for years; the fact that he applied it now to Pauline made him in no way worthy of condemnation. Had he possessed the intellectual faculty to judge her otherwise than by the accepted dogmas, their relation might have ripened without danger of blight. Crane was doomed from the first to have his view of her coloured by his theory. Directly he left her side his thoughts swung into the old deep ruts.

When he was with her all his sardonic sophistry dropped away from him. He saw her faults, of course. He was surrounded by the visible signs of her crassness and tastelessness. Indeed, her establishment resembled a gigantic symbol of untutored vulgarity. It dominated the country-side; it was so much a monument to mere commercial supremacy that it shocked the observer in somewhat the way a dollar-sign hundreds of feet high would have done. It immortalized the depredations of the wily old robber-baron; it was a tangible



proof that the daughter was tarred with the same stick as the father.

Crane couldn't but realize the sordid truth; nevertheless, in Pauline's presence he came to feel himself a champion and a protector. His interest had waxed speedily to a genuine liking. The spell of her great eyes held him more and more; it could at times cause him to forget the less mysterious lure of her other physical attributes. As he gazed into the revealing depths, he glimpsed the quality in her that exalted her and made her a thing apart from the new-rich herd. It was a pity that this power of reading her significance should melt into thin air once he was literally out of range. While Pauline looked at him, Crane experienced an emotion of compelling force, a stir of pity and a wild desire to measure up to her trust; he knew her then for a woman of strength and inflexible purity.

It was during his fourth visit that he let his hold on himself relax. With a prophetic vision of the peril the situation contained he had hitherto acted warily, though with a realization that the moment he'd have her in his arms must come. Pauline made no attempt to keep him at a distance. She believed in him utterly and scorned anything like subterfuge or concealment. From the instant she discovered her love for him she had confessed it in silent dignity by her unfaltering glance, with a frank surrender, with a fulness of quiet admission that evidenced her complete faith in his honour and integrity. A man of Crane's nature could not long resist the mutely eloquent offer.

The night when he determined to give his emotions their head was of just the right enchantment. The day had been of a caressing softness, the sort to make a man drowsily conscious from first to last of his physical well-being. Crane hadn't once lost the muffled beat of his pulses; even when he had been quite motionless he had been aware of a pleasant ache in his whole frame. Summer warmth always has this effect of drawing out one's fatigue and lassitude through every pore, but of failing to

finish its soothing ministrations; a vague, throbbing soreness in the muscles is pretty sure to remain.

So with Crane; when twilight at last crept in, he felt as weak and heavy and happy as if he had been wallowing for hours in a bath of tepid water. Dinner had been of an exotic, plenteous richness; Pauline's table groaned with dishes extravagant, succulent, profuse in array, intricately builded, and smothered with sauces hot enough and colourful enough to resemble molten ore. Her idea of furnishing, as to the interior both of her house and of her guests, was magnificently consistent. Crane gorged to a point past repletion; on a languid evening, the body somehow persists in a state of hungry, unappeasable craving. Pauline, as usual, ate with moderation and drank only one glass of wine. For her, the display of food was the chief source of satisfaction; in the actual consumption of it she had little interest.

Later they strolled about the grounds aimlessly. Pauline, in a mood of sweet contentment, talked earnestly and with a measure of confidence that was touching. Her happiness was complete at times like the present, when she could forget her loneliness in the joy of listening and sympathetic presence. She wanted to leave nothing unsaid; for her, a complete unbosoming, a telling over of the thoughts she had never expressed before seemed the supreme compensation of all the years of solitary exile. While she walked beside Crane, one hand on his arm, and her face raised in childish eagerness, the flow of her discourse sounded to him far away and faint. He didn't take in what she was saying. To him then, what Pauline uttered didn't matter; what he himself was feeling alone counted. Afterward, unfortunately, her words came back to him.

"Do you know," she had announced, "I don't really resent the way people ignore me. I see my shortcomings. I have a good education—I can read French; but I lack so much—oh, such a fearful lot. I wouldn't have let you come here like this, if I hadn't realized



that you understood. You can be charitable, because you're the sort to pity me for my faults and not to be blinded by them. You're like dear, kind Mr. Seymour. I've struggled against odds; I've come out all right. Don't I deserve, a little, your commendation?"

She paused for the affirmative sign. Crane, in the full flood of intoxication, put an unsteady hand on hers and smiled his encouragement.

Pauline sighed.

"I'm not a climber; of course you know that," she went on after a moment. "I don't want to shove my way in. It would be useless, for one thing; besides, even if I *did* succeed in gaining some ground it would mean nothing to me. I don't think for an instant that I'm as good as the people who have family; but if I was, I wouldn't be happy with them. Don't you see what I mean? Ah—you do; I'm like an open book to you. I suppose it shows I'm common to have such respect for the people who snub me; but I can't help it. I take after my mother for that; but *she* had ambition.

"Poor mother! You've heard all about her—everyone has. We might have been content together—only she was so restless and anxious to be fashionable. She's weak and foolish and ridiculous. But I do miss her—often I do. If she'd stayed with me till I was grown up, I believe I could have helped her. It's too late now. I'm afraid, at times, that she might come back. She wrote me not long ago—her only letter for over a year. She *may* come to me some time. It wouldn't do her any good—and she'd be a trial.

"She'll crave notoriety until she dies. It would be my duty to watch over her and try to amuse her, to make her forget how dreadfully worn and fagged she is. That would mean publicity, publicity, publicity! We'd be laughed at and sneered at. How could I hope to keep even *your* gentle sympathy then? My only chance for happiness is to be out of things, to live here always without ever going off my grounds. I love my place; your liking it has been—oh,

such a comfort. I got my strength, my power to accomplish things from my father. This is my one big achievement and it's been my one consolation. I want to stay here—forever and ever."

She paused, to take in lovingly the sweep of it. Then, with a wistful weariness, she murmured, "But it's so miserably lonely and empty. At times I ache for companionship—for one friendly and unselfish soul."

She broke off and pressed Crane's arm lightly.

"I shouldn't talk so—now," she told him. "I've been happy this summer. I've found what I've been after, what makes all the difference in the world to me."

She looked into his eyes; on her face there was no trace of boldness, no gay challenge, only the tranquil dignity of a woman who loved deeply, wisely, confidently, and who saw no need to hold back her confession. The silent revelation had never before possessed such intensity.

Crane, to give himself the last delicious thrill of suspense and longing, stopped short in his tracks and contemplated the girl without touching her. He felt giddy; he saw nothing clearly but her tremulous mouth. So he stood for a moment, motionless and gazing at the offered gift; then he bent down quickly, swept her into his arms, and, pressing his face to hers, kissed her. His lips closed on hers, as if he were crushing a flower to sense its keenest savour. The blood drummed at his temples.

While he still held her to him, however, a sudden realization of the futility of the thing awoke in him and without warning the tension snapped. Whether fear or an instinctive stir of loyalty struck coldly across his ardour he could not have told; whatever the cause, he groped for control and gained it. His mind steadied and took up its functioning again.

He saw in a flash that Pauline was in his hands; and he understood both the peril and the treacherous brutality



of his plying the advantage to the full. The pressure of his arms relaxed; with a pang of defeat and renunciation he veered from passion to a caressing tenderness. Brushing her cheek lightly with his lips, he released her. He was pale, unstrung, powerless to conceal the shaking of his jaw.

For the first time they found it impossible to meet each other's eyes. Crane stared at the ground and, thrusting his hands into his pockets, strove to appear unconcerned. Pauline examined her flashing rings. Crane knew that she was happy and that an unwonted shyness, a girlish timidity was disturbing her serenity; her trust, however, remained unshaken—that was pathetically obvious.

At last she dropped her hands at her sides and turned to go back. Crane swung mutely into position beside her. They said nothing; the silence remained unbroken until they reached the house.

Pauline kept her face averted and peered at the secret stars that seemed to pant in harmony with her clamorous heart. Crane stared gloomily at the ground. It would have brought the girl all the anguish of disillusion had she been able to read Crane's thoughts; on his side, the man would have experienced the deepest self-loathing if Pauline's exalted rhapsodies had been made audible.

At the foot of the colossal staircase in the entrance-hall they separated with a simple good-night that sounded to them both thin and absurdly meaningless. Pauline mounted the marble flight without looking back.

Crane, watching her, was moved to a miserable pity. She appeared to him then tragically fragile and guileless and helpless in the midst of the vast gleaming spaces. He turned and strolled desultorily out to the terraces. While he lit a cigarette a clock near by boomed the hour. Crane counted the strokes.

"My God!" he muttered. "Ten o'clock."

His blank astonishment was a proof of the prodigious significance of the struggle he had been through. It had

seemed of an exhausting length, and in reality it had lasted but a few minutes.

#### CHAPTER IV

LATE the next night, Crane sat in his bedroom. He had drawn a chair to the window; his elbows rested on the sill and his face was buried in his hands. He still had on his evening clothes; the points of his collar tortured his neck, but, though he ever and again flung up his chin with an instinctive striving after greater ease, he was unaware of the bodily discomfort.

He was a prey to the most cruel of all depressions—the black despair that follows a mad, irremediable transport. Crane's remorse pressed him down, overwhelmed him with an actual, palpable weight. The particular torment of which he was the victim was like a stumbling under an intolerable burden, a groping in the darkness for a foothold. Pauline in her anguish became visible to him by blinding flashes. He saw her eyes, all the more terribly accusing for the sultry flame in them that had not quite died out; he could still recall the shudder convulsing her when she had felt his lips on her throat.

Then he remembered nothing but her harsh sobs and the dawning on her face of a new, crushing suspicion. He had left her crouched in the darkest corner of the ornate pavilion on the brink, with its sculptured groups of flabby Loves rioting everywhere in the true fashion of the Roman decadence. The half-ruined edifice had been one of her greatest treasures; he wondered what it would mean to her now. They had made it their destination this evening; Crane had known when they crossed the threshold that he was beyond the power of a whispered fear or a call of prudence. The drama had been swiftly relentless, as had been the immediate repentance.

Pauline had pleaded only that she wanted to be alone; Crane, taking the charitable course, had made no attempt to comfort her. He had strode out into the darkness of the Park, and, flinging



himself down at the foot of a tree, had shut his eyes and cowered before the avenging furies. For hours he stayed there, silent except for an occasional muttered curse. At last he got up, shook himself wearily and made his way back to the house. In his bedroom he found the warmth of the night oppressive; he had kicked a chair over to the window and thrown himself into it.

His mouth twisted to a snarl as his whirling thoughts concentrated on his vacillation throughout the critical day. He had risen in the morning determined to have the thing out with Pauline, to tell her the truth and get away. He must force her to realize, he'd reflected, that she could never count with him more than with the other people of his sort; he must show her the futility, the utter fruitlessness of their intimacy. With marriage out of the question, and with the relation altered and complicated by the episode of the night before, an abrupt severance was the one sensible course.

He had planned it all carefully; but the moment Pauline had appeared with her cordial smile he had wavered, hesitated and resolved to prepare for his revelation with a scrupulous care that would make the shock of his words less cruel. So he had given her all day his gentlest attentions; and when evening came he knew he had sacrificed his priceless opportunity for confronting her with the difficult facts of the case. He had been too kind—that had been his mistake. By an unconscious exercise of strategy, he had succeeded only in tying his own hands; he had hoodwinked himself into believing that by his tenderness he was leading up to the words that would bring release.

As a matter of fact, he had charmed the girl to a stancher trust in him, to a state of mind that would have made the blow incredibly unfair; moreover, his ministrations had worked dangerously on his own emotion. When dinner was over, he could feel sick at his weakness and imminent treachery; but by that time everything had faded to in-

significance before the overpowering force of his fierce desire.

When Pauline had left him at the table he had already surrendered.

"Oh, hell!" he mused, throwing away his cigar as soon as he had lighted it. "Why should I hesitate? What else does such a girl expect?"

Joining her on the lawn, Crane had deliberately avoided her brilliant eyes. He had dubbed her an accomplice; he was determined to treat her so; and yet he was afraid to face a glance that might arouse his conscience before it should be too late to effect a renunciation similar to that of the night before.

Suddenly, as he sat huddled over the sill of his window, he became aware that it had begun to rain. The first big drops fell in heavy splashes; they made an intermittent music, each with its own distinct and spluttering sound, like preluding notes. Then, without warning, the clouds emptied themselves of their accumulated store; the downfall became a solid curtain of water. The black darkness grew murmurous. A subdued, silvery clamour awoke and increased in volume until it filled the night with its liquid voice. The ground drank up the torrent and joined in the tumultuous song, at first softly and sleepily, afterward with a loud gurgling, as of some beast that wallowed and lapped and greedily glutted itself.

A breeze of delicious coolness blew on Crane's face. He got up and, leaning far out, let the rain stream over his forehead, pelt on his closed eyelids, course down his cheeks. He opened his mouth and felt on his tongue the flat taste of the drops. With his arms braced on the sill, he received the full force of the deluge while it lasted.

It ceased with an amazing abruptness. At the moment when the steaming hiss was at its height silence descended swiftly like a mother-bird on her noisy brood. The downpour had spent itself. The air was miraculously still. From the soaked earth there came at long intervals the sound of a heavy plash. That was all.

Crane turned away from the window.



The cramped stiffness of his limbs and the jarring ache in his head struck him for the first time. His brain, however, had quieted; that at least was a blessed relief. He switched on the lights mechanically and began to undress. Five minutes later he was in bed and asleep from sheer mental and physical exhaustion.

Late in the morning, a note from Pauline arrived with his breakfast-tray. The few lines were pathetically dignified, of a restraint quite admirable. There was no hint of weak pleading. She scorned to throw herself on his mercy—that was obvious. Pride prevented her from playing on his sympathies by means of her abject plight. The phrasing of her letter was careful, judicious and stiff. The characters alone betrayed her; her hand had evidently trembled uncontrollably while she wrote.

"I ask you to go away at once," the note ran. "Don't think I condemn you. I understand. But it would be painful for us both to see each other now. We must meet only when we can face our problems, when we can hope to find some way out. Anything like a clear view is out of the question at present. So we must wait and try to be quite fair with each other. If you insist on seeing me today, it will bring no solution—it will merely add to my misery and unhappiness and shame. Remember that I don't make excuses for myself. I know, of course, that you will be perfectly just; I have already got that far toward a saner outlook. I have been frightened, distrustful; but this morning I feel again something of my faith in you—"

## CHAPTER V

TEN days later, Crane arrived at Newport to pay his sister, Mrs. St. George, a visit that he had put off unconscionably from week to week. Coming to town on a shopping expedition, she had buttonholed him for luncheon, and, after a scolding of some length, had wrested from him a consent to run down for the Tennis Tournament.

"You're seeing altogether too much of Timothy Welsh's daughter," she had told him. "Why do you get involved with these queer specimens, Peter? Of course, I know there's nothing in it; but when people begin to annoy a man's family with their gossip it's really time he woke up to his proper responsibilities."

Crane had leaned across the table with a sudden earnestness. He was on the point of confronting his sister with an astounding recital of facts; but the half-indulgent irony in her flashing eyes arrested him. He looked away and for a moment said nothing. Then he dropped casually, "Yes, indeed, Ethel—please prepare for me on Sunday."

He had refused to consider a trip to Newport until he should have reached a final decision in regard to Pauline. Well—he had forged an irrevocable determination now. The visit would be in the nature of a challenge. He must needs throw down the gauntlet to his own people. He could not hope for any result other than a definite break.

Crane had faced his problem, during the ten solitary days in New York, with conspicuous honesty. Directly he had read Pauline's note he had—for the first time—made no compromise with his weakness. He had given his wily instinct of self-protection no quarter whatever. At last the realization had come to him that an easy shirking, a suave begging off of matters of importance could in the end commit a man to a lifelong cowardice.

Heretofore his skill in escaping from entanglements had been somehow excusable. He had betrayed no supreme trust; the dishonesty he had practiced had for him proved the winning stroke in a battle of wits with an opponent by no means estimable. At least, so he had been able to feel after the first throbs of repentance had died out.

That Pauline was different from the rest he knew. Deliberately, he threw aside all his former shrewd aspersions. The task was a stiff one; his natural tendency would have been to focus a keen light on her crass faults and to read



by them a warrant for his own desertion. The conviction of Pauline's integrity had much to do with Crane's new uprightness; by contrast, the realization of his indisputable weakness had forced itself upon him and awakened in him a terrified desire to cling to what self-respect he had left. As for any prospect of happiness to come from his throwing his lot in with the girl, Crane knew the absurdity of such a hope. He could still wince at a vision of the future; but he stood his ground notwithstanding. He was ready for the first signal from Pauline.

It was for chance to intervene at this juncture. Crane had succeeded only after a prolonged struggle in conquering the trickier side of his nature. It had been necessary to plan out every detail of his honourable course, to trace each step to the very moment of the final settlement with Pauline so that no possible loophole for escape should present itself. It was indeed as if he had learned by heart a tremendously difficult rôle; a single unlooked-for shift in the scene might be perilous. The fact that he was suddenly caught off his guard, that he was taken unawares, amounted to a grim misfortune.

For the first day of the Tournament Ethel had gathered together a congenial crew. Nobody paid any attention to the match. It was merely an occasion for rushing about from box to box. Crane found it both jolly and exhilarating. There were so many pretty women he hadn't seen for months, so many opportunities for the kind of banter he excelled in.

The Casino could always stir delightful memories; no place in the world was more lovely, more engagingly modest. Like a great vivid billiard-table, it offered up its lawns; over them one rolled as it were in parabolic curves, like a ball in play. One fetched up with a polite click against stationary groups; perhaps, managing to nose out a bright red or yellow companion, one proceeded to guide it to some out-of-the-way pocket into which one disappeared with it.

Crane loved to develop the far-fetched

figure to the last extravagance. He realized its weak points. For one thing, the women were seldom round or glistening. They were for the most part slender and of a subdued luster, not by the widest stretch of the imagination to be confused with billiard-balls! They resembled more a crowd of fabulous birds sunning themselves in the daintiest of cages. Well—whatever the right image might be, Crane adored the spot. It brought out his easy snobbery as nothing else could.

His sister never failed to sparkle in her Newport setting. Superbly at home, connected by some tie of relationship with almost everybody in sight, quite conscious, moreover, of her beauty and distinction, she possessed all the charm of a favorite petted child in some royal nursery. She was small, dark and fiery. People spoiled her unconscionably and found, in her audacious petulance, their reward. It was no wonder she deemed it her right to be rude whenever she pleased. Crane, facing her in her husband's box, couldn't help feeling a thrill of delicious satisfaction as he watched her and chuckled over the shafts of wit and ridicule she sent flying in every direction.

All at once he became conscious that a group in a near-by box was attracting the ironical attention of the gallery. He looked up with a vague curiosity that on the instant veered to a hot confusion. He had seen Pauline and had felt within himself a quick pang of revulsion. She sat with her back to him; she was talking to the woman beside her and her head was so turned as to make the profile visible to him. A big hat of vivid pink, with a cluster of extravagant roses, cast a shadow over her eyes and robbed them of their intense brilliance. Her features had a bluntness, a heavy sullen prettiness that pointed her origin startlingly.

The gown she wore was an exquisite thing of white lace; it should have been of the right, becoming sort for her figure. She seemed ill at ease in it, however, and awkwardly self-conscious. It was obvious that Pauline knew she faced



a hostile gathering; but the realization did not sound a challenging note in her ears. It burdened her, rather, to a deep dejection. She was aware at this moment of nothing but her shortcomings. The people about her had the right to criticize and poke fun at her, since they were better than she was. She could feel a bewildered pain; but there was in her heart no resentment, only a sorrowful acceptance of her ignominy.

Her words, that had somehow crept into Crane's consciousness on the night two weeks before, stirred now in his memory. Helplessly, as he gazed at her, he submitted to the renewed marshaling of all his old prejudices. Pauline, the while, continued to converse desultorily, furtively, with her companion.

Crane noted how she talked under her breath, as if fearful of being considered presumptuous should she move her lips or utter an audible sound. Her whole attitude confessed her the intruder, the trespasser on a hallowed domain. She kept her eyes lowered; she seemed to cower in the hope that she might be passed by unnoticed.

It was the first time Crane had ever seen her in public; as he followed out his observation, a dark flush spread over his cheeks.

The woman beside Pauline explained but too thoroughly her presence on the scene. It could be nobody in the wide world except Mrs. Welsh. She possessed a weak, battered and all but demolished beauty. Her blue eyes, that she kept with difficulty wide open and coquettishly quizzical, had a fevered vacancy. The features yet retained a childish sweetness that pointed in the cruellest fashion the ravage the years had wrought around them. The cheeks were hollow, a brilliantly tinted and glazed concavity. The make-up covered the telltale lines of suffering; but it failed to conceal that the poor woman was in a faint daze, that she was miserably ill. Her hands, with a persistent nervous vivacity, played over her hair, over her gown, over the ropes of pearls she flaunted; they darted about and quivered in restless intensity, as if they'd

been humming-birds at a flowering shrub.

The lady appeared to be immersed in clouds of mauve chiffon rather than actually gowned. She was both aged and infantile, both vivid and ghastly. Her high, tremulous treble, with its accompanying gushes of hysterical, insipid laughter, floated piercingly to Crane and caused him a shudder. Whatever Pauline's attitude might be, it was manifest that her mother was bent on making a bewitching impression. With her drugged perceptions, she in all probability couldn't see clearly; the gallery must be for her just a swimming blur that left her at liberty to draw her own flattering conclusions. It was for the unhappy daughter to get the reception in its true aspect.

Crane let his gaze drop miserably to the floor. He had not bothered to give the two men in the Welsh party his scrutiny. He knew only too well the type Pauline's mother would perforce select as escorts.

His sister, the keenest of observers, had caught the swift change in Crane's expression. Turning slightly in her chair, she directed her bright eyes to Pauline's box. If the Welshes might be termed poachers, Ethel at that moment took on the value of an indignant little game-keeper. Her gaze was as sharp as the jab of a hornet. It had power to draw Pauline's uneasy attention. Startled, Crane raised his head. The next moment, he found himself looking straight at Pauline. He saw her bite her lips with an involuntary fierceness of protest at the unfairness of her predicament. Even more than Crane himself, she sensed the tragic irony of the situation.

"How could I hope to keep even *your* gentle sympathy then?" Surely she must be aware that he remembered the words.

Pauline's face had become suffused with color; Crane was quite pale now.

The two remained motionless for what seemed an interminable period. Then, with a desperate attempt to appear merely casual, she bowed; he re-



turned the salute. She had given him his chance to make the nod cool, distant and non-committal. He had taken advantage to the full of her kindness.

Pauline, as she turned away, pressed a hand over her mouth in a last supreme striving after self-control. The effort proved her mettle. Straightway, she could meet unflinchingly Mrs. Welsh's thin babble of inquiry. The excited mother had noticed the bow, perhaps even had managed to make out the blush, and was evidently avid of particulars.

The pumping of his heart filled Crane's ears. He answered his sister's pointed comments without any definite knowledge of what he was saying. The silent interchange with Pauline revived his pity for her. He was stricken, moreover, at the vision of his facile, cowardly acceptance of the boon she had offered him. By every law of decency, of fitness, it was his part now to get up and go over to her box. Pauline poignantly needed his aid at this moment—of that he could have no doubt. The priceless opportunity for an open avowal had come. Once he sprang to whole-hearted action, the problem would have been met and the solution hastened.

Never, in the whole dim future, would a crisis so rackingly painful arise. The stage was set, with the entire congregation of his associates foregathered to witness his cordial championing of the solitary and ridiculed girl.

Crane, as he sat there, experienced a sudden grim exultation at the prospect of gulping down the bitter draught before the astounded crowd. The thing could be done deftly, without ostentation. He had only to join Pauline and her mother with a frank cordiality and presently to leave the place in their company. People could put their characteristic, definite interpretations on his conduct. It would simply mean that he had formed a new allegiance; it would put the ultimate stamp on his attitude to Pauline.

So Crane resolved to see it through. He was not aware of any hesitation; to

him it seemed that he had mapped out his course and was biding his time. As a matter of fact, the something stronger than his conscious will—the stealthily watchful instinct of self-protection—was at work within him and, exerting a baleful strength, kept him helpless in his chair.

It was as if an unseen force of which he remained ignorant had pressed a knee against his chest. When at length he saw the Welsh party leave their box and make for the stairs, he attempted in a panic to get to his feet. Then he found himself at grip with the full-fledged power, wily, indomitable, triumphant. It weighed him down, crushed him like an enemy in a night-mare. As a result, he sat for an appreciable time quite motionless in his chair.

The abrupt conclusion of the struggle almost resembled a return to consciousness. Crane jumped precipitately to his feet and rushed out into the aisle. Pauline had disappeared. He had shirked the crucial test. By this time, too, the elements within him had worked to so perfect a fusion that he could reflect, with a sophistical, untenable bitterness of conviction, that it would be utterly useless to follow her.

For the remainder of the day, Crane's mood was one of miserable perplexity. Remorse and self-justification mingled persistently in his uneasy thoughts. He longed to get clear of the maze of doubt. A decision, of whatever sort, would, he felt, act as a refreshing quietus. He'd got to the point where he couldn't bear longer the perpetual flux in his brain; if he didn't soon commit himself irrevocably, he would go mad. He stood now on immensely perilous ground; he would be quite incapable of neglecting any dropped hint that might serve as a guide out of the labyrinth.

Alone with the other men in Mrs. St. George's dining-room after dinner, Crane felt himself for the first time lifted pleasantly out of his moodiness. He had drunk a good deal and his goading thoughts seemed somehow to have faded out. He sat in a warm daze



in the midst of the convivial crew and found, to his amazement, that he was both happy and exuberantly communicative. His uncertainty of the day struck him as preposterous, a vanquished bogie that had been expelled forever by the incantations of mere casual, social banter.

The man on his left was talking. "Yes, she is a pretty little thing—damned attractive. And after all, she doesn't belong to the first fearful generation. Girls like her progress; under the proper guidance, they often go far. Of course, there'd be a good many weeds to root up—that's obvious. It would take courage, though it *could* be done. But I don't suppose one's really going to marry her—eh, Peter?"

Crane was silent. He wondered with intensity how frank he'd been. Evidently he had been discussing Pauline with conspicuous relevance to the problem in hand. He mused into his glass now for a long moment.

Suddenly, he faced his companion and, before he was aware what he was saying, the words were out.

"Marry her?" he had asked. "Marry her? But why, in the name of all that's holy, should I *marry* her?"

His voice had been loud, with a trumpet-note of freedom and exultation in it. At least half a dozen men had heard him. Of the meaning the words held there could be no possible doubt. Crane had gayly, delightedly confessed to his relations with Pauline. He had followed out the proffered lead. He had taken sides with his own sort against the girl.

The next morning found him haggard and unsteady from a profitless vigil. Savagely he had cursed himself and taken the full measure of his weakness, of his perfidy. The hours of silent communion had done no good whatever. He knew himself at last powerless to revoke his decision. He had openly thrown over Pauline. The day had given him his opportunity both for generosity and for treachery.

Well—he'd chosen. He must abide by his act. His whole life, so it seemed,

had been a slow preparation for this crisis. The conclusion had been inevitable, from the moment—years ago, long before he had known of Pauline's existence—when he first allowed his insidious weakness to sway him. He had been his own master once—but not now. The shaping of his life was forever out of the control of his better nature.

Pauline was a forfeit; his own self-respect, too, had gone down in the conflict.

## CHAPTER VI

CRANE could even now find a specious sort of comfort in the plan he projected; he was indeed able to affirm silently that the course squared with Pauline's plea at their first meeting.

Since the time had come for an irrevocable break, he must at last face her, he must effect the sharp and instantaneous cleavage.

"It's the gradual realization of somebody's desertion that I hate," she'd told him. The remembrance of her words seemed miraculously to clear his path.

It didn't occur to him that he was considering himself, too, at this moment. The immense difficulty of the imminent scene alone struck him; the courage it would take brought a satisfaction and inspired a spurious conviction of his strength. He refused to consider the fact that a quick, neat shearing away of the shackles would work to his own advantage by leaving him on the moment absolutely free.

On the day following his return to New York, Crane drove out to Pauline's Long Island place. He was informed at the door that Miss Welsh was walking somewhere in the grounds. Without hesitation, he made for the ruinous pavilion on the rocks. He had not looked at the extravagant edifice when he had come by it in the motor; now, however, he took for granted, with an unconscious stir of recollection and of instinctive egotism, that he would find her there.



As he skirted a great clump of rhododendrons a few feet distant from the place, he caught sight of her. She stood, facing him, in the doorway; from the stiff erectness of her figure, it was manifest that she was waiting for him. Their eyes met; then Pauline, averting her face, stepped quickly out on the stretch of lawn and hurried up to him. As she approached, she betrayed neither eagerness nor anger. It was obviously her intention to head him off in the open, to avoid at any cost a meeting in the pavilion.

"So you've come," she said at length in a low voice. She stood now, at a short distance from him. "You've gone over all I said in my letter; you're prepared to be quite *fair* with me, to show me that my faith was wonderfully well-placed?"

She flashed him a swift glance of scorn and looked away. "A woman can trust a man and still not be a perfect fool—isn't that the truth you're here to tell me?"

"I'm here to keep nothing back," Crane returned. "I'm here to be honest and to let you see how I've struggled to measure up and how I've miserably failed. If I'd proved worthy, I could be happy today. God knows I'm far from being that."

"Is that honest?" Pauline's tone was sharp. "If you're really honest, you'll tell me at once that you are too good for me. Do you think I'm stupid and foolish enough to believe anything else? Perhaps you *have* been fair to me—perhaps you've worried and fretted about me. But you've made up your mind now; you wouldn't come to me of your own accord unless you'd got the better of your scruples. Don't, please, try to be gentle—you'd only be the more insulting. You're too good for me—that's what you're here to say. It will be pleasanter for us both if you get it over quickly."

"Ah *no*!" he protested. "I've got to show you, a little, where I stand. Don't you see what it comes to? I've been fair to *myself*, Pauline. I've examined myself through and through and I

realize that I'm not worth your anger. I'm hardly worth your scorn. I've gone where my weakness led me. I haven't either strength or loyalty left in me. You're far *above* me. Give me at least the credit for understanding that. Remember that I've done nothing deliberately; I've merely been driven by my own faults into a hole. I'm without courage, without self-respect. I'd sacrifice everything for the smallest part of your fineness and truth, Pauline. I've given myself up to what's base and treacherous.

"Don't think that, because I am helpless, I'm also content. You've suffered because of me—there's no denying that; but you have the satisfaction of feeling your unhappiness is no fault of your own. I have *no* refuge, Pauline. My misery's all of my own making. I've sold myself to the devil and I can't go back on my bargain!"

The confession, beginning on a note of carefully planned humility, had at last moved him to a despairing self-abasement and had struck from him a complete avowal, an abandonment to miserable sincerity that left him pale before the vision of his plight. He followed the thing through bitterly.

"It's not in my power," he wound up, "to give you allegiance in future. I've forfeited my chance. If I had the opportunity again, I wouldn't *take* it. I've sunk to that, Pauline. A traitor to the good in himself's a traitor to the good in others. Oh, you're well rid of me—damned well rid of me."

"Rid of you!" Pauline shivered and put a hand to her eyes. "As if I could ever be rid of you! For the rest of my life you'll be in my heart to torture me. I love you—you've known that from the beginning; you've taken advantage of it cruelly. There's enough of my mother in me to make me go on caring even after you've insulted me. Do you think a woman who had pride, who had self-respect, would tell you she loved you now? You pity me, just at this minute; you condemn yourself. But you'll soon be laughing at me and your friends will know everything



there was between us. I'll have that to haunt me and keep me wretched; but it will do no good. I'll never lose my love for you nor my feeling that you're better than I. If my faith in you had been justified, I could have developed and made myself your equal. You've taken that from me; you've brought me out Timothy Welsh's girl—and nothing in the world more! I'm simply common and ordinary and you have the right to treat me as you please—"

"Pauline!" Crane interrupted sharply, with a pang half of protest and half of guilt.

She paid no attention but continued in a harsh, broken voice.

"It's true, it's *true*! You've seen how I acted in public. You've all talked of nothing but me and my poor, sick, foolish mother. Ah, I know, I *understand*, I tell you. You're right, perfectly right, perfectly justified. Don't I prove it, as I stand here? Could the woman who admits she loves you at a time like this ever be anything but a disgrace to you?"

Crane stepped forward abruptly and seized her wrists in a tense grip.

"Pauline, Pauline," he cried out, "for heaven's sake don't talk like that. Let today finish it, so far as I'm concerned. I've acted brutally toward you. Remember that—and forget you loved me. It was never *I* you loved. It was the man I seemed to be, the man you *thought* me, that you gave yourself to. Keep him in your heart—for a warning or an ideal or whatever it may be. Don't, *don't* confuse him with me as I am now. I don't deserve it. It would be ruinous to you and an intolerable judgment for me. You've suffered—through me; don't fool yourself into making the curse permanent."

Pauline, her hands hanging limp in his, faced him with a weary certainty.

"It was *you*," she persisted, "that I loved. It wasn't an ideal. That's gone—you *must* know it—everything's gone that used to hold me up. You changed me; I can't go back now to what I was. I was proud of myself once, and I had the right to be. I could

never have lost all I had fought for and gained if you had helped me. For weeks, I've had nothing but fear when I've thought of you. I've suspected the truth ever since I sent you away. How could *I* count, after all? It's come down to that every time. I'd prepared myself for something bigger than I should have hoped for. I was mistaken, beaten completely. From the minute I realized that, I gave up trying. I'm not a bit better now than my father and mother before me. It's the truth. You can't deny it, and I *know* it."

She freed herself and retreated a step.

"Now please go," she pleaded, "please go at once. Your being here is certainly painful for you and hard for me. I want to be alone; in this place I love, in this place you've probably ridiculed from the start. I've said far too much already; don't force me to say *more*—"

She covered her face with her hands and her breathing caught in a sob.

They were silent while Pauline pressed both palms against her mouth and struggled for control. Then she dropped her arms to her sides, heavily. The impression of her fingers showed dark on her white cheeks. She fixed him with her great, sombre eyes that seemed to send out a last dying gleam. Crane lowered his head, unable to meet the anguished, mute accusation. The glance had forced home the command that her words failed to carry. Without looking at her again, he turned and walked away in a blank despair. He did not see the flickering fire burn out; he did not perceive the lightning-like extinguishment of her guardian-flames, the rayless, expressionless darkness that settled over her eyes.

Ten minutes later, when he came in view of the pavilion on the brink, he saw Pauline crouched over the balustrade. Her arms, wide apart, rigidly supported her as she leaned far out. Her head was sunk on her breast, as if she had not the physical power to hold it upright. She had at that instant a pitiful dignity in her utter surrender to



a grief that knew neither cowardice nor fear. Broken and crushed, surrounded by her spurious splendours, with her eyes plunging into the abyss, she hung there, miserable, silent, determined.

She had heard the motor; a slow shudder convulsed her and her taut arms relaxed. Crane felt himself go cold; an icy sweat sprang out on his body.

In a flash, Pauline's purpose had grown clear to him. His heart tugged at his side and dropped like lead; then, as he shut his eyes dizzily, the blood rushed back into his veins. He sprang to his feet. With his hideous terror, there had awakened in him a mad desire to reach her side, to take her in his arms, an overpowering impulse to seize her now for his own irreparably, eternally. He had forgotten the world, his new-won freedom, everything but the girl herself.

"Pauline! Pauline!" His cry rang out stridently. He had stumbled out of the automobile with outstretched arms.

She did not turn her face to him. Her arms crumpled under the weight of her body as she threw herself into space. She fell straight and with an appalling, rushing swiftness. Ten feet below the pavilion a rock jutted out; her forehead struck against it.

Crane sickened and lurched forward with a stifled cry. He had seen the livid gash torn across her brow; before the blood had begun to gush from the wound, Pauline had hurtled over the verge and disappeared. From afar below, there came the sound of her body striking the water.

## CHAPTER VII

By the grimmest stroke of an ironic fate, perhaps also because of the ministrations of a half dozen eminent medical men, Pauline recovered. For weeks she lay unconscious and dying, only to have the gift of extinction incredibly snatched away.

Crane remembered the events of the terrible day itself but dimly. Bruised and bleeding from a perilous descent, he

had plunged into the water and dragged her up on a stretch of beach. The rest had been a blur, a chaos through which disorganized hands of frightened and bedizened servants had flashed with confused speed, through which the thin plaints of Mrs. Welsh sounded ineffectually, hollowly. A semblance of order had been achieved only after the arrival of the surgeons.

Pauline, the center of the whirling excitement, had rested in the inscrutable, unapproachable calm of death. Shattered apparently beyond hope of cure, she yet seemed a being scornfully apart and aloof from the puny efforts of the mere human herd. It had appeared somehow in the nature of a sacrilege to erase from her the marks of divinity and bring her back to actual, bodily suffering. At any rate, the accomplished fact constituted one of the great surgical triumphs of a generation.

For Pauline and Crane, on the other hand, the recovery worked to a tragic anti-climax. The suicide had severed the relation superbly. It had given the girl a baleful majesty; it had stamped her as a creature tameless and proud. Her faults, her deliberate confessions faded out on the instant of the sacrificial act and she became the woman who, betrayed cruelly, had killed herself rather than face the sordid truth, rather than give harborage to a weakness that might end in further surrender. For Crane, Pauline would have been a lifelong regret. He would have remembered only that he had wished with the force of his entire nature to make amends and that he had been magnificently thwarted. His recollection of her would have narrowed down and concentrated on the ultimate moment, to the exaltation both of the girl and of himself.

The protracted illness resembled a relentless dilution of the essence in the cup of suffering. Crane yet drank deep, but the taste grew flat and vapid.

For one thing, Pauline's attempt on her own life had soon afforded the newspapers food for scandal. Every



periodical traced the stages of her improvement, with an inevitable dwelling on "possible motives" that resolved itself into malicious, scandalous chatter. There were pictures of Pauline and her parents, views of her notorious establishment; before long, throwing off all reserve, the less estimable sheets published photographs purporting to be likenesses of Crane himself. He was dubbed "The well-known young club-man said to be the immediate cause of the tragedy," or "The scion of a famous line thought to be implicated."

Of course, this publicity made Pauline doubly pitiful. Crane realized it; but it none the less tainted his memories and cheapened intolerably the whole wretched affair. It poisoned, for him, the purity of the vision that had been before his eyes. Mrs. Welsh, moreover, was a blighting influence. Pauline's door was barred to him; but during his visits he found the mother ever on the scene. Her feverish cordiality, her meaningless tears, her joy at the distinction his presence lent to things, infuriated him.

Pauline's illness had given her the right to drink freely and to stimulate herself, even beyond her wont, with her pernicious drugs. Often she had no control over her speech or her movements. Leaning heavily on his arm, swaying against him in a half-blind daze, she would wax, in the effort to hear her own voice over the tumult of her irregular pulses, to a strident squeak. Crane, watching her narrowly on these occasions, could have no doubt as to the source of the newspapers' inferences and innuendoes.

Pauline at last sent for him. The crisis had been passed a fortnight since and she was now definitely committed to convalescence. Crane, knowing that he was to be alone with her, could not at once summon the courage to enter the bedroom. That the scene would be immensely critical he was aware. The state of his own thoughts, also, was patent to him as it had seldom been in the past. He had reached the point now of unflinching antagonism. Pauline, failing

in her supreme attempt to spring clear of her sordid heritage, must have been thrown back on a full acceptance of her lot.

She herself had warned him of the decline the summer had brought. At present, she must be immersed beyond recall in the middle-class darkness. Suffering could have worked no miracle of purification or refinement; it could have resulted only in an unqualified surrender.

Pauline had possessed strength; the lingering weeks of pain, however, must have killed that. Since she had been unable to put an eternal quietus on her inherited flaw, she could not but be the victim today of that parental gift. She was the Welshes' child; with the mother vividly present to Crane, how could he throw off the suspicion that Pauline herself might be determined to make of her futile act a sword above his head? The thought placed him at once on the defensive.

Alone with her in the bedroom, Crane for a moment stood in silence at the door. He had given her one swift glance and then fixed his eyes on the floor. On guard as he was, he knew the peril, for him, of a too thorough examination of her pitifully wasted figure. Pauline sat propped up with pillows. There were bandages over her eyes. Only the lower part of her face—her sunken cheeks and her mouth, from which the warm color had been drained away—was visible. Her hands, clasped tightly in her lap, shook.

It was she who broke the stillness.

"We have only a minute," she warned him, in a voice that sounded unutterably weary. "I'm not strong enough to say all I'd like. I want to make things clear—in the little time I'm allowed; then I can sleep."

She paused and the muscles around her mouth twitched as if, stiff from their long disuse, they pained her. Then she resumed.

"I shall come out all right, you know—a few scars that won't disfigure me." She put a groping hand to the coverings that hid her eyes, and let it drop heavily.



"And I shan't try to kill myself a second time! So you see, I don't wish to threaten. It's a full understanding I'm after—nothing else. You are clever; I needn't say much to you. I don't hope for a great deal. I have blundered, because I was ignorant. From the first I hadn't really a chance. It was more my fault than yours—all the misery could have been avoided if I'd been somebody different, somebody *better*."

She drew in her breath sharply, and broke off.

"Ah—but I'm forgetting; I've *got* to be quick," she murmured the next moment. "I ask you not to talk, not to explain, not to make a single excuse—only to answer one question. I love you and I'm not good enough to count. Will you take me as I am? When I am quite well again, will you let things *go on* until—you're tired of me?"

Crane's eyes dilated and, taking an abrupt step backward, he muttered the words over, at first unable to grasp their full significance. It was only after he had repeated them again and again that the meaning struck into his dazed consciousness and fastened there. They had an effect like a stunning blow. Pauline's actual presence and the room where he stood were obliterated. He was aware now simply of the dizzying turbulence in his brain.

He lowered his head and waited. It was as if what Pauline had said had been the last physical element thrown into a chemical solution. For the moment, the added substance made the bubbling confusion seethe the more; but the value of it would soon assert itself, to the ultimate achieving of a transparent clarity. So in fact Crane's mind slackened its speed and settled at last to a steady conviction.

He looked at Pauline. Her head had sunk lower on the pillows and her lips were stretched to a thin line. The beating of her heart shook her whole frame. Crane felt for her an anguished pity; but the emotion was powerless to exert an influence over his coldly conquering, steeled mind. Pauline had sought to hold him at any cost; she

had cast aside everything that had differentiated her from her unspeakable mother. She was in the dust before him now; Crane, however, reflected with biting keenness on the diabolical shifts, the tricks and subterfuges, the venom distilled from the very heart of a woman who clung to a man on such an understanding. A relation of the sort could develop poisonous tentacles that nothing could shake off. Pauline today was miserable, crushed, absolutely sincere in her love and self-abasement. But Pauline in a year's time? Pauline when he should at last have tired for good?

Crane, with his training and traditions, knew the well-marked stages on the road, knew that a girl like Pauline could lose all scruples, all decency, with a fearful rapidity. She threw herself on his mercy now; the future must bring its prodigious change. He could project himself into the maelstrom, could see himself vindictive, brutal, insolent, but none the less inextricably involved and sunk in a cowardly acceptance. It would be inevitable, his ending up as the victim, the actual prey.

Since Crane's mind was composed as it was and stored with its particular freight of inherited prejudices, of theories tested by his own unexalted experience, he was incapable now of reacting in any but the one way. He could pity Pauline; but he could not possibly expose himself further. His *safety* demanded that he take a certain course. Had he been constituted of different stuff, Pauline's influence might have wrought its miracle. Hers might have remained a humility that fought for no sordid advantages; her self-abasement might never have veered or grown tarnished. In the end, an achieved happiness might have added its crown to the relation. The power was in her; it was not, however, in the man.

Pauline lifted her head from the pillows. "You want today to end it—ah, I know it, I know it," she whispered. "I've caused you enough torment to get



away now—that's your wish. I'm tired, terribly tired. Tell me the *truth*. Whatever it is, it will help me. I can sleep—I can be quite reconciled. It's all over? Tell me *that* and then go away."

Crane, realizing that she desired it straight, squared his shoulders and muttered the few sundering words. "We could never go on, Pauline. We've come to the end."

Then, betrayed swiftly and unconsciously into insincerity he wound up on a note that was to echo with a hollow vibration in his ears for the rest of his life. "There's some good left in me. Dragging you down would be more than even *I* could bear. You're still above me; I have enough strength in me to keep you there in spite of yourself, in spite of *myself*."

Pauline silently let her head drop back on the pillows. For a moment, Crane

awaited a sign from her. She gave none; she lay before him now mute, her lips as inscrutably sealed for him as if she had been dead.

He fumbled for the door and let himself out—into a future that even at this moment caused him a shudder, with the sense of its barren stretch of waste. His resilience, the quality in his nature enabled him to rebound facilely, had been somehow sapped. For once, he would not emerge unchanged from the cloud. He would never awaken with quite the old joy to the discovery of an undimmed radiance about him. Pauline, with her magnificent, sombre eyes, would be ever present, an accusing apparition to haunt him and throw a shadow over his life. Like Dido, she would glide out of the shades and, baring her breast, would show him the gaping wound.

[*Finis.*]



## Ten Thousand Angels

By John Russell McCarthy

TEN thousand angels dance  
On the point of a needle.

Ten thousand angels, perhaps—  
But one moccasin-flower,  
Making a valley holy,  
Tells more of God.



IT'S the qualities overlooked in courtship that make life bearable after marriage.





# The Mouse

*By Robert Merkle*

**I**T was once my good fortune to see a small mouse fulfilling his destiny.

There is a bureau of antiques on a corner of the Rue des Fous. It is an establishment where you can buy, for a song in a very high key, nearly anything once the possession of past generations. There are old clocks and vases, necklaces and chains, inlaid boxes, paperweights, pictures, trinkets, and bric-à-brac from two hundred years ago. The shop is littered with them; the windows are full of them. Many of them ought, by right, to be in forgotten attics, in company with quiet ghosts, heavily sheeted with dust. But they are wilfully exhibited for gain in the shop on the Rue des Fous.

The show-window of this shop is precisely upon the corner, and it is made brighter than day by the municipal gaslight which floods it with a ghastly brilliancy all night long.

On the night which I speak of, there were in this window a huge old clock, much bric-à-brac, some vases, boxes

and images, and three swords and a pistol, but particularly the clock, which stood monstrously in the foreground. The window was spick and span as a Dutchman's kitchen. It was brilliant with cleanliness.

As I paused in front of it, I saw a small mouse nervously poking his nose from behind a vase. The gaslight blinded him. He was very timid. Twice he advanced and retreated. But the urge was in him: he knew what it is that a mouse must do. And suddenly, throwing all caution to the dogs, regardless of me and two others who were watching from outside, he pattered out tremulously in the full glare of the gaslight to the antique clock and, after smelling the pedestal, scurried as quick as a wink up one side and down the other; then up that side and down the first; then up the first and down the other—and finally, whisking his tail, retreated into the interior darkness out of which he came.



**W**HEN a woman ceases to care how she is looking and a man where he is looking, they're dead.



**A** WOMAN can judge her suitor's love by the degree of affection he displays for her mother.



# The Disappearing Statues

*By Christopher Hawthorne*

## I

THE silly season had reached its crest. The air was full of baseball and Bolshevism. Overall clubs had gone into the discard and men were threatening to paint their legs rather than pay twenty-five dollars for a pair of trousers. The streets were full of bravos with shaved heads, protesting against the high price of haircuts. Not a few—for the same reason—were wearing queues.

Forward-looking dervishes of all kinds were coming out of the woods, shrieking for everything between the free coinage of labor at a dollar an hour and a six-months' vacation twice a year. Polka-dot automobiles had broken out with great fury and hairless Mexican dogs were supplanting Pekinese as pets. Manhattan had become one vast psychopathic ward.

In such a time as this what chance had the mere disappearance of a statue from Union Square to attract attention? None whatever—apparently. Besides, the monument to Gen. John Berribeezer had become quite an impersonal thing to present day New Yorkers. The iron dog that glared at the bronze warrior from the savings bank across the street held fully as much interest to the casual eye. Small wonder, therefore, that when the figure vanished from its pedestal the void created was purely physical—as a missing front tooth from the mouth of an old friend.

It was not until the magic touch of mystery fell upon the absence of the old landmark that any interest was manifested. Nobody—public official or pri-

vate citizen—seemed to know how, why or even just *when* the statue had been taken. The first conjecture that a subway kiosk was to be placed on the spot proved groundless. The commonplace suggestion that the statue had been stolen was dismissed as a physical impossibility. For all that could be shown to the contrary, a half ton of bronze in the shape of a man had become suddenly dematerialized and joined the gallant soul of the general in the ether beyond.

"What's become of Berribeezer?" That irreverent question naturally was followed by another: "Who was he, anyway?"

According to the inscription on the pedestal the monument had risen in the warm afterglow of some heroic achievement in the Mexican War. Mightier events had long since obscured the glory of the deed.

Dr. John Henry McCord, President of the University on the Heights, was the first to throw any light on the mystery, but this proved only a feeble and indirect ray. In a curt letter to Professor Alexander Hamilton Jones he demanded the resignation of that gentleman from the faculty. Professor Jones promptly and with great vigor declined to give up his post.

The correspondence between these eminent educators revealed the fact that Jones, in the course of a lecture on "American Values," had deplored the erection of monuments to persons of ephemeral fame. He had cited the Berribeezer monument as a flagrant example in point and sneeringly intimated that the bronze might better have been



used in the manufacture of door-knobs. Since the statue had disappeared immediately after the delivery of the lecture, Dr. McCord assumed that some hair-brained zealots had taken the hint from Jones.

The professor disclaimed any intention of inciting the larceny. He stood firmly on his academic privilege of free discussion. Strange to say, Dr. McCord's own son (John Henry, Jr.) headed a considerable section of the student body in support of Jones. This detail caught the public fancy and both Jones and the young rebel were applauded.

But it was a serio-comic note that dominated the discussion. Cabaret clowns found it easy to raise a laugh by shouting: "Is Berribeezer in the house?" Lobby-lollers in fashionable hotels thought it great fun to have the corridors paged for the general. So it befell that, after sixty years of dull bronze oblivion, the warrior's fame now flashed like a harlequin meteor across the skies.

Then a smart-aleck newspaper thrust itself forward. It caused 50,000 ballot cards bearing the question: "Where's Berribeezer?" to be distributed in the Polo Grounds during a baseball game. The ushers had hardly completed the distribution when something resembling a snowstorm broke over the field. Perhaps ninety-nine per cent of the cards had been torn to bits and blown into the air. The umpire called the game while the tellers gathered up what few cards had been used. The result was announced from the mound as follows:

Play ball .....	14
I should worry .....	11
Search me .....	9
Who cares? .....	1

Who cared, indeed! Everything was going with a rollicking hurrah. That same evening the last bottle of champagne was auctioned off at the Gomorrah Hotel and knocked down to J. Irving Noblestone, the king of profiteers. In the midst of the festivities a squad

of marines, disguised in cloth gaiters, black choloolahs and green goggles, invaded the place and confiscated the bottle. The next day it was cracked over the bow of the largest battleship ever built. And then—

## II

THE statue of old Eli Hooper, chair and all, disappeared from its pedestal. As in the case of the Berribeezer bronze it simply vanished—nobody knew how; nor could hide or hair of it be found anywhere. Another joshful hoot went up. Who was this glorified sneak thief who purloined bronze statues right under the noses of the police? The Art Student's League placed pumpkins on the despoiled pedestals and the wide, illuminated grins pretty accurately reflected the public mind.

Enraged at all this foolery, Dr. McCord summarily ejected Professor Jones from the university. Young McCord promptly quit both the school and the paternal roof and took to the hills with his following. But all this was only in the day's fun. As the price of skirts rose the skirts themselves had moved upward apace. A great clothing standardization movement was at its height. The women's clubs of the city held a parade in Fifth Avenue wearing socks and men's garters. A clash occurred between the men with shaved heads and those who were naturally bald for the possession of front seats at the Public Library. The bald heads insisted upon their historic privilege, but the shaved heads, gaining recruits by the thousands, overwhelmed them. When the parade started every head in the grand stand was as free of hair as a frog of feathers.

The morning after the parade it was observed that two more bronze figures had been handily nipped from the parks. Dr. McCord's voice again was heard crying in the wilderness. When he went before the Grand Jury to demand the indictment of Professor Jones several impatient members yelled: "Down in front!" and the investigation of the Nut-Sundae Octopus was resumed.



A few nights later 100,000 automobile owners held a torchlight procession as a protest against the soaring price of oil. The Celluloid Collar Club, 300,000 strong, assembled in an elongated body on the curb to lend moral support to the movement. Sparks from the flambeaux ignited one of the collars and in a twinkling a vivid, fiery snake ran along the curb for two miles, crisping the ears of the members. There were no fatalities, but the incident had a sobering effect. Besides, another statue had disappeared during the excitement.

Thus far only the monuments of native Americans had been despoiled. But the alien section of the population (about ninety-five per cent) was becoming uneasy. The Italians formed a guard around the statue of Garibaldi in Washington Square; the French performed a like service for the beloved Lafayette; veterans who "fought mit Siegel" watched their hero with dimmed but vigilant eyes. Green guards proudly paced the lawn around the statue of Robert Emmet, the eight local factions dividing the watches into three hours each.

News of these curious doings reached the outlanders. Indignant Hicks from New England and exasperated Jaspers from the Middle West began to pour into town. From the steps of the historic City Hall they thundered forth their reproaches. They wanted to know if it was for this that their forefathers had made crimson the fields of Lexington and Bunker Hill.

Stung by these reproaches and moved no less by the spirit of reverence shown by foreigners for their immortal dead, robust Americanism leaped into the saddle. A mass meeting of natives was called in Room 137 of the old Chelsea Hotel. One citizen who came late was obliged to stand up at the mantel, all the chairs having been taken. Resolutions were passed requesting the Navy Department to land a body of marines to protect Grant's Tomb and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. It was further demanded that warships play searchlights on these objects at night.

In the meantime the futile frenzies of reform, protests and boycotts were subsiding. The Rat Scampers of profiteers and the Rabbit Runs of consumers had petered out. A serious attempt was made to solve the mystery of the disappearing statues. The first sound note of common sense was heard when the Board of Aldermen voted an appropriation for burglar alarms to be attached to all remaining monuments, ornaments and movable objects made of bronze. Dr. McCord pronounced this a constructive measure. Professor Jones treated it with contemptuous silence. Young McCord and his followers merely laughed.

All this time extra-official agencies had been quietly at work. A scientist of note advanced the theory that some subtle form of electrolysis, generated by efforts to communicate with Mars, had consumed the bronze figures. Just why this phenomenon should have worked in such a hit-and-miss fashion he was unable to explain and the theory was rejected. An astrologer came forward with the assertion that the disappearance of the statues could be regarded as nothing else than a warning that some mightier event was impending. Historical precedent was not lacking to support the idea and it gained quite a following.

Strangely enough, up to this time no suggestion had been made that the solution of the mystery might be found through the medium of the ouija board. The astrologer's hint of Jovian wrath naturally brought an appeal to the spirits to the front. It happened at the moment that Sir Arthur Dodge, an eminent English spiritualist, was in the city. J. Irving Noblestone again stepped into the breach. He offered to establish a permanent earthly home for spooks if Sir Arthur would materialize General Berribeezer and gain from him any information that would lead to the arrest and conviction of the guilty parties. The proposal met with instant public approval.

Sir Arthur declined the issue, but when a procession, headed by brass bands, halted in front of his hotel to



urge his acceptance, he yielded. The International Chess Tournament, which was holding forth in the hotel at the time, adjourned to the Ordnance Proving Ground at Fort Hancock.

### III

IN order that there should be no shenanigan or fraud practiced, the Hippodrome was hired for the test, tickets sell at fifty dollars a pair (plus war tax) in advance and one hundred dollars (war tax prepaid) at the curb on the night of the seance.

All factions and interests were represented. Dr. McCord was chosen chairman and Professor Jones secretary of the meeting. Labour organizations were represented by the Structural Metal Workers' Local, No. 20, and the Buttonhole Makers' Soviet. Science, Art, Letters and the Police had proportionate allotments of space on the stage.

Dr. McCord opened the meeting with a short speech full of grim skepticism. He noted the fact that a certain person (evidently referring to his son, John Henry, Jr.) had not succeeded in raising the price of a ticket and that one disturbing element had thus been removed. This allusion brought insistent calls for Professor Jones. That gentleman rose and uttered the single cryptic word: "Wait!"

Then Sir Arthur himself stepped to the front. He announced that he would employ no medium, no ouija board or any mechanical device whatever. At a hint from the press table he also rolled up his sleeves. A signal from the spiritualist plunged the house into darkness. Whatever incantations Sir Arthur might have indulged in went unobserved, yet they proved effective. A dim figure was seen to emerge from the floor of the stage. A faint glow from two rows of brass buttons down the front of a military coat and gilt epaulettes on the shoulders served to identify the spectre. It was General Berribeezer.

Sir Arthur addressed himself directly to the ghostly newcomer.

"I trust, General," he said suavely,

"that you will acquit me of any intention to offend in calling you before this large and skeptical gathering. The emergency, however—"

"Say no more," interrupted the spirit with quiet urbanity, "this is an opportunity I have long awaited. The events of the past two weeks, I may say, are all within my privity. They have given me little concern. I have been conscious for a long time that my monument in Union Square had become a mere incumbrance. It is barely possible that my thought was communicated to Professor Jones by one of those playful sprites with which the nether world is vexed. It was far from my own intention to direct the professor's mental operations."

Dr. McCord snorted his satisfaction.

Leaning forward he thrust in a question:

"Who stole your statue, General?"

The shade of the warrior turned to the interrogator with a gesture full of dignity.

"I must remind you, doctor," came the haughty reply, "that your question is unethical in the extreme. While, latterly, it has been the practice of certain good-natured spirits to appear willingly when summoned before gatherings of this kind, you must have observed that they never impart any real information. I have only to remind you of Hamlet's unfortunate family affairs to show the deplorable results of carrying grudges beyond the grave. Independent of all this, I would be unwilling to appear in the light of an informer, having always regarded the breed with detestation."

Sergeant Clancy, who was in charge of the police in the theatre, muttered approval of this sentiment. Dr. McCord, crestfallen at the rebuke, subsided. A voice from the rear was heard: "Good for you, Berribeezer, you're no squealer!"

Dr. McCord rapped sharply on the table and the house electrician, mistaking this for a signal, flooded the stage with light. Instantly the spirit vanished.

A shade of annoyance passed over Sir Arthur's face.



"I hope," he said ironically, but without looking at the chairman, "that if General Berribeezer is good enough to return he will be free from any more impudent questioning."

Dr. McCord angrily relinquished the gavel to his nearest neighbor and stalked off the stage. Professor Jones smiled with satisfaction. At a signal from the new chairman the lights were switched off again. Sir Arthur was heard stumbling around the stage and urging occupants of favored places to move back a little. When an area was cleared the outline of the general gradually became visible within it.

Then a most remarkable thing occurred. A second shade, topped with a battered fatigue cap of Civil War vintage, suddenly appeared and stood at attention before the general.

The intrusion evidently rattled the new chairman and he clumsily permitted the gavel to fall to the floor. Drawing out a pocket searchlight, he sought to recover it in the darkness and a clear white ray lingered for a moment around the general's short ribs. Instantly the shade of the warrior began to prance about the stage in uncontrollable risibility, clutching at the spot where the light had fallen.

"Stop tickling him, you bunglesome blighter!" exclaimed Sir Arthur wrathfully. The chairman shut off the lamp with a sheepish apology.

The shade of the general recovered without any show of irritation, and, turning to the ghostly newcomer, inquired: "What is it, orderly?"

A dead silence fell upon the audience—a silence that was broken by a single crisp sentence:

"The statue of Robert Emmet has disappeared!"

Robert Emmet! It has been recorded that Freedom shrieked when Kosciusko fell. Sergeant Clancy now emulated her example with a bellow that shook the house from pit to dome: "*Erin go braugh!*"

Patrolmen O'Hara, Kelly and Shea took up the cry and charged toward the doors, beating an impartial tattoo on the

heads of the men seated along the aisles.

It was a matter of congratulation the next morning that the ambulance service had proved equal to the emergency. It developed that inter-factional bickerings had broken out in one of the eight sections of the Sinn Fein and during the scrimmage the statue of the illustrious martyr for human rights had been left unguarded. In the interval it disappeared.

Obviously, half-hearted measures no longer could be considered. The futility of all efforts by native Americans to solve the mystery naturally led to some drastic proposals. The hyphenated press put forward the suggestion that all natives living in the city be segregated on Hoffmann Island, while the sane inhabitants of the community (those of proved foreign birth) grappled with the problem.

In an effort to ward off this threatened humiliation Dr. McCord issued a call for a Committee of One Hundred to meet in City Hall. The response was gratifying in the extreme. Although most of the volunteers lived in Westchester, Connecticut and Northern New Jersey, the point of actual residence was waived on the score of business connections within the city limits.

Dr. McCord called the meeting to order. Professor Jones, who had horned in despite an express invitation to stay away, sat in a window recess facing the statue of Nathan Hale which stood at one end of the broad stairway directly outside. The chairman said that the time for action had arrived. Professor Jones smiled sardonically. After a long silence a member of the committee arose and said that "something had ought to be done." An approving murmur greeted this sentiment, then another silence.

Professor Jones, who had been gazing absently out of the window, turned languidly with the remark: "Somebody is stealing the statue of Nathan Hale."

An instant rush to the windows followed this announcement. There, as in the days when George the First was



king, the majestic figure of Nathan Hale, bound hand and foot, swung from a long, oscillating black arm. With one mighty leap Dr. McCord took the frail sashes and small panes of a window with him. As he regained his feet on the lawn the spectators saw a huge, dimly outlined juggernaut swallow the statue like an oyster. A moment later Dr. McCord himself disappeared in the monster's maw. Then, with a succession of terrific snorts, the horrid thing turned and lumbered across the plaza toward the Post Office.

The man who had offered the suggestion that "something had ought to be done" was the first to recover his senses. "The police must be notified of this outrage," he said. The other members of the committee looked at their watches. The last suburban trains for Long Island, Westchester, New Jersey and Connecticut would soon be leaving.

#### IV

DR. McCORD was in his office as usual in the Administration Building the next morning, but he shut himself off from interviewers. That same night, however, the statue of Nathan Hale was returned to its pedestal. In swift suc-

cession, the bronze figures of General Berribeezer, Eli Hooper, Robert Emmet and others resumed their accustomed places.

The excitement following this extraordinary turn of events was not as great as might have been expected. The Giants had returned from a triumphal tour of the West, having won twenty-two straight games. After a long season in the cellar they were now on the roof—so to speak—and were climbing the pennant pole. A perfect avalanche of enthusiasm had overwhelmed all matters of lesser importance. It is probable that not ten persons in New York read the bargain offer of a ten-ton army truck equipped with a steel crane. If they did no comment was made on the fact that the sale was made to a Hoboken junk dealer at Dr. McCord's private garage in the Bronx.

Dr. McCord himself showed a great willingness to let the whole matter drop. Professor Jones was reinstated and permitted to resume his lectures on "Americanization." It was noticed, however, that young John Henry McCord did not return to the college. His father had obtained a position for him in the experimental department of the du Pont Dynamite Works.



## Finale

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

**B**LACK starlings came to the elderberry trees  
In glossy flocks and feasted, and were gone. . . .  
And you were gone. Followed long silences  
Of crinkled pine cones dropping one by one.

I felt the soft strange eyes of the whole wood,  
The hidden hosts of wild things watching me;  
And once . . . a puzzled rabbit ran and stood  
A long while . . . sad, I thought, and solemnly.





# Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

## § 1

**THE FIRST CASUALTY.**—The first thing about a woman that ages is her laugh. The laughter of twenty-three is never the laughter of nineteen. The laughter of thirty, for all the cosmetics in the world, is a laughter with lines and crow's feet. A woman may deftly deceive the approaching years: she may retain the face and figure of the youthful twenties: but her laugh will inevitably betray her. For the music of the laugh of the 'teens is the first thing in a woman that dies.

## § 2

**The Hate Market.**—When I was a boy, they taught me at school that it was my duty as an American to hate the English. When I got older, there was a shift in the market and they told me that it was my duty as an American to hate the Spaniards. Then, not long ago, there was another move and they informed me that it was my duty as an American to hate the Germans and—a few days later—the Austrians, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians and the Turks. Now, another shift, and they are about to tell me that it is my duty as an American to begin hating the Japs. I am an American, but don't hate the English, the Spaniards, the Germans, the Austrians, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, the Turks or the Japs—and I never did, and I'm never going to. I am good and damn sick of this hate business.

## § 3

**On Labour.**—All democratic theories,  
S. Set—Nov.—3

whether Socialistic or bourgeois, necessarily take in some concept of the dignity of labour. If the have-not were deprived of this delusion that his sufferings in the sweat-shop are somehow laudable and agreeable to God, there would be little left in his ego save a belly-ache. Nevertheless, a delusion is a delusion, and this is one of the worst. It arises out of confusing the glad industry of the artist with the dogged, painful industry of the mere human machine. The difference is important and enormous. If he got no reward whatever, the genuine artist would go on working just the same; his actual reward, in fact, is often so little that he almost starves. But suppose a garment-worker got nothing for his labour: would he go on working just the same? Can one imagine him submitting voluntarily to hardship and sore want that he might express his soul in 200 more pairs of pantaloons?

## § 4

**Historical Note.**—One wonders, reading the inflammatory bulls and handbills of the current Americanizationomaniacs, what they would do about certain eminent characters in American history, imagining the dead resuscitated. Was George Washington 100 per cent American? I have very grave doubts of it. George lived and died in violation of nine-tenths of the great moral statutes now on the books—the laws that make the United States the leader of the world in rectitude—the laws that all accursed foreigners find it hardest to obey. He owned, operated and patronized a distillery. He swore



like the foreman of a composing room. He engaged in lamentable amours. He was a plutocrat and a profiteer. Worse, he was a downright hyphenate, and always thought of himself and spoke of himself, down to the time he got into politics, as an English gentleman. George had no belief in or liking for the plain people. He regarded them as not only stupid and ignorant, but also as dishonest. He abominated professional war veterans, and tried to put them down. He regarded pension-grabbers as public nuisances. Imagine him, today, given his choice between living under the chemically-pure *Kultur* of Iowa and passing his declining years in the company of polite and civilized Italian immigrants, with "Tosca" on the phonograph and a few carboys of illicit red wine in the cellar! Where would he go on idle nights—to a patriotic meeting of the American Legion or to a surreptitious *Bierabend* of the Arion Gesangverein? How would he prefer to die—with a Methodist dervish bawling "Throw Out the Lifeline" into his ear, or with an appetizing cutie passing him seidels of Bourbon?

## § 5

*Entre Nous.*—Looking over the pages of my forty years, I find that of all the men I have known there has been but one whom I could trust absolutely and of all the women, only one. A sour record, verily. A lugubrious commentary on the world. But is your record any better?

## § 6

*The First Attribute.*—Above everything else, a natural amiability is the quality most essential to a woman's attractiveness. If she isn't by nature pleasantly agreeable, all her beauty, position, sex appeal, wealth and wit can avail her nothing in her tête-à-tête with man. She may be as pretty as Lady Marjorie Manners; she may have the position of a Crown Princess; she may

have all the physical magnetism of the mistress of Prince Murat; she may be as rich as an Astor and as witty as a Rip; but if God has failed to endow her with a sincere and honest smile she will soon or late—as sure as there's a devil in hell—lose her quarry to the nearest gracious shop-girl.

## § 7

*Ill-Humoured Remark.*—Is it hot in the rolling-mill? Are the hours long? Is \$10 a day not enough? Then escape is very easy. Simply throw up your job, spit on your hands, and write another "Rosenkavalier."

## § 8

*Unreasonable Prejudice.*—Each of us has his prejudices that will not bear scrutiny and analysis. Many of these prejudices are wholly without rhyme or reason, yet nothing can subvert them. They are the blind spots of the mind and soul, senseless, idiotic, yet immovable and unchangeable as a wall of stone. Take, for example, my own. I can't abide orchestral music in the open air. There is no reason why Beethoven's Sixth *al fresco* is not as compelling as Beethoven's Sixth indoors, yet there is something about it, when it is played out of doors—at a Stadium concert, for instance—that invariably impresses me as baroque and futile. Again, the prose of Gilbert Murray is excellent prose, yet I can't comfortably read it. I try to read it; I know that it is meritorious; but I don't like it. And I can't figure out why. Still again, there are Gobelin tapestries. The best of them fail to move me: they all look exceedingly ugly to me; I wouldn't, so far as my personal taste goes, give ten dollars for the most priceless of them. Still again, Hauptmann's "Hannele," an excellent piece of imaginative dramatic writing, impresses me as burlesque. For all my consciousness of its merit, I feel myself snickering at it. In the same way, I have a senseless prejudice against



stock-brokers. I know two or three who are very fine fellows—well-educated, companionable, men of good taste and considerable charm. Yet I can't be friends with them: there is something about them—I don't know what—that I don't like. Then, too, there are Romain Rolland, silk underwear and the "St. Sébastien" of Augustin Ribot. There is something to be said for each. But, for all that I know it, I can't bring myself to a proper appreciation.

§ 9

*The Movies XVI.*—The champions of the motion picture, replying to the doubters, urge that the cinema is still in its infancy and that it is therefore unjust to compare it with the other arts. "Give the motion picture time," they cry. "Think of the other arts in *their* infancy!" Fair enough, Olaf. Think of the drama in its infancy. Think of sculpture in its infancy. Think of architecture in its infancy. Think of literature in its infancy. And, Olaf, keep on thinking!

§ 10

*A Great Unknown.*—All the literature books are silent about the greatest stylist who ever wrote English in America. I am by trade a critic of letters, and particularly of the national letters, and yet I do not even know his name. He was an editorial writer employed by the New York *Sun* a quarter of a century ago—specifically, between 1895 and 1902 or 1903. After that, if he still held his job, he began to lose form; the changes in the ownership of the *Sun* gradually purged it of all its old distinction. Today he seems to be wholly extinct. The *Sun* has become thoroughly munseyized, and thus has no more to do with beautiful letters than the Allentown *Gazette* or the Mobile *Register*.

As I say, I do not know the name of this mysterious old master, but of his astounding capacity for arranging

nouns, adjectives, verbs, pronouns and conjunctions in charming sequences I have a very brilliant recollection. The writing that he did was writing full of extraordinarily caressing rhythms, and yet often broken and made various by surprises. It was the English of a man with a truly astounding ear. The right cadence never failed him. He was never inept, trite, cacophonous. He chose not only precisely the right word, but also precisely the right clang-tint; he apprehended words as things in themselves, and not as mere tin-cans for ideas. Reading him was an experience only partly intellectual; the chief joy I used to get out of him was æsthetic. He remains in my mind as not only the greatest stylist that the United States has produced, but also as one of the half dozen greatest that the English language has produced.

The content of his daily discourses was of secondary importance, but a mention of a specimen or two may serve to identify him. He was the man who wrote those memorable lampoons upon the corn-fed poets J. Gordon Coogler, James Byron Elmore, Bloodgood H. Cutter, Sylvanus F. Bill, Dithyramb Dick Hamilton, Abel Sinkenzooper. He was the fellow who pursued and harassed the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company of Boston, the Hon. Hoke Smith, the Hon. Dink Botts, the Hon. Pot Sams, and all the rest of the old *Sun* stock company. He was—but maybe I begin to describe someone else. Maybe, in fact, there were two of them. I often wonder. Who knows who he was? Why has no sweating professor ever unearthed and hymned him?

§ 11

*On the Quality of Envy.*—Accurately, we envy a man less for the big things than for the comparatively trivial. We envy a millionaire not for his millions but for his comforts that may be had for mere thousands. We envy a great artist less for his talent and the work it produces than for the *kudos*



these bring to him Envy, in nine cases out of every ten, will be found upon analysis to be a marked-down emotion.

## § 12

*Political Frauds.*—The so-called par-lour Socialists of yesteryear, now all scared under the table by the Espionage Act, were once widely regarded as political altruists—that is to say, as aristocrats who sacrificed their own interest, like Lafayette, to serve the interest of their inferiors. This, however, was actually true of very few of them, as was shown when the band began to play and they ran to cover in a manner about as aristocratic as that of a barber shaving a longshoreman. The fact is that nine-tenths of them were not aristocrats at all, but simply cadets of the new plutocracy, which is to say, gentlemen removed from the washtub and the gas-pipe ditch by a scant space of one or two generations. Their conversion to Socialism did not represent a self-sacrificing stooping; it simply represented the secret recognition, by inferiors, of their own inferiority. In sober truth, a good many of those glittering Marxians were actually inferior to the poor Russian Jews that they so heavily patronized. The fact became brilliantly evident when the chance came to suffer for the cause. The Lafayettes leaped for safety almost unanimously, and were presently bawling for the old flag as loudly as so many profiteers. The kikes, in many cases, stood their ground heroically, and so went to jail, and were beaten up by Dr. Palmer's blacklegs, and shed their blood that the Marxian balderdash might live.

## § 13

*The Faithfulness of Woman.*—Let us believe, and cherish our faith, in the constancy of women. Let us also believe, and cherish our faith, that cigars do not burn down the side, that tooth powder keeps the teeth from decaying, that rain-water is excellent for the complexion, that the French love us, and that the laundries mend socks gratis.

## § 14

*The Booze Edisons.*—In few departments of human ingenuity have there been revealed a greater inventiveness and resource than in the department of mixed drinks. Consider the multitude of rickys, cocktails, pousses cafés, highballs, stingers, angels' nipples, suis-sesses, gin daisies, Tom Collinses, shandy-gaffs, cups and what nots that have lent their suave voices to the pleasure choral of the world. Consider the imagination that originally conceived and executed them. Consider the endless preliminary experimentations, and the endless preliminary, and heroically suffered, belly-aches. In what avenue of human activity has there been displayed a more diversified and successful acumen? Booze, truly, has its hundreds of unsung Edisons!

## § 15

*War and Its Effects.*—I lately read an article arguing that the United States was the only Great Power to come out of the war a winner, inasmuch as the others all lost the flower of their young manhood, whereas the American losses were so trifling as to be almost indiscernible. The theory has a fine plausibility, but I have a notion that an examination by a Galton or a Karl Pearson might reveal some holes in it. A long and difficult campaign, with wholesale butchery, might have actually done the country more good than harm—by holding the population within bounds, by reducing the number of professional war veterans and, above all, by stamping out hundreds of thousands of the relatively unfit.

The risk that a man runs in war, remember, is not simply the blind chance of getting shot; it is also the risk of succumbing to disease, of wearing out through hardship, of coming to his end through ignorance and stupidity. This second risk is probably far greater than the first. A veteran army, after four or five years of hard war, is composed of very superior men, as everyone knows.



They have not only been relatively lucky; they have been relatively quick-witted and tough—in brief, relatively superior.

The American army came home substantially as it went abroad. Some of the weaklings were left behind, true enough, but surely not all of them. But the French and German armies probably left them all behind. The Frenchman who got through those bitter four years was certainly a Frenchman far above the average in vigour and intelligence; all of his brothers who were below the average were dead. In the German army it was found that, as year followed year in the field, the death rate from disease sharply and constantly declined, and with it the death rate from the enemy fire. The weaklings and the fools gradually disappeared; the men left were very vigorous men and, what is more, men with a natural talent for protecting themselves, which is to say, men of superior sense.

The notion that long wars exhaust a people is probably only partly true. They leave scars, but they also leave certain very valuable benefits. The Napoleonic series of wars, it is said, shortened the average stature of Frenchmen by three inches. Maybe it did—but it also made them tough. Is it so soon forgotten that the same people who were so tremendously butchered in the Thirty Years' War—perhaps the most sanguinary and exhausting contest in history—were ready in the next century to fight the Seven Years' War—a combat waged with superlative vigour and skill, and against the largest imaginable odds?

§ 16

*Laughing Love.*—The enduring love is the love that laughs. The man and woman who can laugh at their love, who can kiss with smiles and embrace with chuckles, will outlast in mutual affection all the throat-lumpy, cow-eyed couples of their acquaintance. Nothing dies so quickly in the heart of the woman as the love that

has been orchestrated by the man upon the strings of the tear ducts. Nothing lives on so fresh and ever green as the love with a funny bone.

§ 17

*Equitibus Cano.*—Another man who remains an impenetrable mystery to me is the writer who deliberately seeks a large and miscellaneous audience. I can understand the fellow who does it as a means to getting money—even the man who thus deliberately writes down, as the phrase is, to the level of the boobery. But what of the fellow who takes positive pride in the fact that hundreds of thousands of imbeciles read and admire him? What of the fellow who seeks and enjoys the adulation of dodos who also venerate Babe Ruth, the Hon. Gamaliel Harding, Henry Ford, Jess Willard and Fatty Arbuckle?

§ 18

*The New Psychology.*—The new psychology of Freud *et cie.*, says a writer in the London *Times*, is based upon the doctrine that "man desires and pursues the truth whenever his unconscious obstacles to that desire and pursuit are removed." In other words, that he will always embrace the truth when his error is exposed to him, and that this release will give him peace of mind. Is the doctrine true? I doubt it. What reason have we for believing that the average man prefers the truth to falsehood? I can see none. On the contrary, it seems to me that he nearly always prefers falsehood to the truth—that it better accords with his habits of mind, and gives him more comfort. The truth alarms and intimidates him. In it he senses an irreconcilable hostility to his normal numskullery. It challenges his feeling, superstitions and prejudices. It is as foreign to his culture as honour. . . . Thus the Freudian psychol-



ogy, if the *Times* gentleman describes it correctly, has an Achilles heel. Thus it squats comfortably upon an assumption that is bogus and nonsensical.

## § 19

*Trivia.*—The trivial is, in love, the stupendous. A girl may continue madly to love a man who neglects her, hurts her, debases her and pokes her in the jaw, but let him in a thoughtless moment make a wheeze on the size of her nose or allude in a heavily humorous manner to her taste in hats, and before he is able to say Jack Robinson she will have made a jump to the next nearest available beau.

## § 20

*Hope Run to Seed.*—Probably the most conclusive of all the massive proofs of man's incurable imbecility is afforded by his unshakable belief that he has an immortal soul—that there is a part of him too ethereal and exquisite to be fetched by the embalmer's formaldehyde. Absolutely the only evidence supporting this notion lies in the hope that it is true—

which is precisely the evidence underlying the late theory that the Great War would put an end to war, and bring in an era of democracy, peace, freedom and pious joy. A bit daunted by the inadequacy of this evidence, man constantly seeks to reinforce it with other evidence. But the further he goes in that direction the more brilliantly he displays his idiocy. Consider, for example, the proofs marshaled by three typical witnesses in widely separated ages: St. John, Swedenborg and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Give them your earnest attention. Study and weigh them well. And then ask yourself if you could imagine a mud-turtle accepting such flapdoodle gravely.

## § 21

*Monogamous Marriage.*—An institution founded upon the theory that the girl who falls into the trivial (and obviously excusable) indiscretion of kissing me behind the door should be punished for it all the rest of her life by being forced to nurse my children when they have the whooping cough, and their pa when he is down with *Katzenjammer*.



## The Birch

By Oscar Williams

THE vivid-white birch in the sunlight  
Is a poised fountain of silver  
Breaking into a foam of green,  
Rippling down in gold-green showers  
Over my heart.





# Memoranda of a Morbid Man

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

## I.

ROSE was an exquisite blonde, with apple-blossom cheeks, a scarlet temptation of a mouth, and an exceedingly friendly disposition. Also she listened delightfully.

Whenever we met, she was *en route* to some charming affair, an unpremeditated dance, a quickly arranged gathering of unusual people, or a newly-discovered spot where one could consume rare and illicit beverages. She was always eager that I go along.

One night she urged me to join her gang. We dined on the roof of the Biltmore, and then hastened to an apartment in Central Park West. There we were festive, for the punch was 50 per cent Portuguese rum and 50 per cent French champagne. About daybreak we managed to elude the rest of the crowd. I hailed a taxi, and we started homeward.

She was drowsy and caressable, daintly and deliciously snugly. In the welcome darkness of the cab, I slipped my arm about her. Her head rested comfortably upon my shoulder. I kissed her, and she did not object.

A moment afterward I was about to request an encore of the caress. But a strange sound mingled with the creaking of the taxi. Yes! It was true! Rose had gone to sleep with her head on my shoulder, and the strange sound was a snore!

## II.

MABEL wrote to me. It was the first note I had ever received from her.

Trembling and excited, I tore open the envelope. The note began: "Derest Gawge."

## III.

STANDING in the lower hall of her home, I waited while the maid gave Hazel her vanity case. Hazel murmured an order to the maid, but I did not catch the words. I was busy contemplating the whiteness of her shoulders, the pale green airiness of her evening gown, the scarlet of her opera cloak. We were about to go to the theater, and her limousine waited outside.

The maid returned, and gave Hazel a small, ornate, glass bottle. With a brief word of apology, Hazel turned from me. I studiously gazed at the end of my cigarette.

A moment afterward, Hazel looked at me with a glint of mischief in her eyes. Then, with a swift gesture, she emptied the bottle of perfume upon me. The scented liquid was splattered upon my coat, and my waistcoat, and made a smear upon my shirt-front.

"Oh!" she gurgled. "I just wanted to frighten you——!"

## IV.

LUCILLE finished a note to me with the words, "Yours truly."

## V.

DORIS came to my apartment without first telephoning to make sure that I was alone.



## VI.

"COME home with me to dinner to-night," Margaret entreated. "My parents are dining out, the cook has departed in a rage, the maid has eloped, and the chauffeur is drunk. We shall be alone. I am going to show you what a wonderful cook I am! I shall prepare, cook and serve the meal myself!"

I accepted her invitation. We had tinned soup, canned lobster salad, instantaneous coffee and a well-advertised brand of ice cream.

## VII.

JOSEPHINE sat down before the grand piano and began fingering the keys.

"What shall I play?" she asked.

"Debussy?" I suggested tentatively.

"No . . ." doubtfully. "I haven't anything. . . ."

"Bach? Rachmaninoff? Strauss?"

"I'm a little out of practice. . . ."

"Something calm and soothing," I murmured. "One of Chopin's waltzes? Something by Nevin? Or——"

"Nothing seems to come to my mind," she mildly complained.

"Some jazz!" I said hopefully.

"Some jazz to make my joints jingle, Josephine!" I entreated.

She began to play. Slowly, mourn-

fully, without glee or gusto, she played "Brighten the Corner Where You Are."

## VIII.

DRUCILLA said, "I confide everything to my mother."

I did not believe her.

This was my mistake.

## IX.

NORMA said that she played tennis, golf and bridge. We tried to play tennis, and she squealed each time her racquet hit the ball. We attempted golf, and she broke my favorite driving iron. We essayed bridge, and she insisted that the nine was higher than the king.

## X.

WHEN Cora appeared upon the beach, a crowd gathered. A clergyman was killed in the crush. Three elderly gentlemen walked in the surf as far as their knees. Her bathing costume was patterned after one seen in a moving picture comedy.

She agreed to meet me in the grill-room of the hotel. She did. When I last saw her she was wearing a green hat with large yellow feathers on it, an orange and heliotrope dress, and pink shoes with gilt heels.



## Foot-Note

By Sam Hellman

IT was while she was talking to him of Spencer, neo-futurism, Freud and relativity, that he became aware of the shapeliness of her ankles.





# Captain Valya

*By C. E. Bechhofer*

## I

SHE was really an absurd creature. She cannot have been much more than sixteen or seventeen, and her face was that of a child. The huge hat of white fur that she wore seemed as big as she was. Her childish figure too seemed out of place in the rough uniform she was wearing; had it not been for the sinister bandage on her right hand, I should have taken her for a schoolgirl dressed up for amateur theatricals. That is to say, if amateur theatricals were even remotely possible in agonized Russia today. She had an appealing smile, in which there was mingled with the gay and childlike an undercurrent of sorrow that made me wonder what terrible things the last few years had brought into her life.

I first met Valya near Ekaterinodar. We had been sent up the railway line from Novorossisk with orders to attempt to penetrate into Rostov as soon as the anti-Bolshevist forces recaptured it, an event which was expected every day. It was bitterly cold, and the covered truck in which we were traveling was too dilapidated to be much affected by the heat of the improvised stove in the center.

When, therefore, we stopped dead with a fearful jerk in the first light of the morning, I was not sorry to throw off my blankets, the top one of which was frozen as hard as a board, open the door of the truck and jump out into the snow at the side of the track. To my amazement, our truck was all alone on a remote siding, except for a similar truck against which we had been so

violently thrown. Rapidly retreating in the distance, past the wayside station, was the rear of the train to which we had been attached. We were marooned, God only knew where!

I was staring round, amazed and extremely annoyed, when the door of the other truck opened and a queer figure clambered through it. It was a Russian officer—I could tell that by the uniform—and a captain, as the epaulettes showed. The officer's arm was in a sling, and a bandaged hand protruded. What was strange about the figure was its diminutive size and the strangely young face.

We made a step toward one another, and suddenly I realized whom I was encountering. It was one of General Denikin's women officers!

We shook hands, smiling, and I explained, so far as I myself understood it, what had happened to us and why we had bumped so unceremoniously into her truck. I asked her where we were, and she mentioned the name of a station some distance north of Ekaterinodar.

"I suppose," I said, "they have made a mistake and left our truck behind here instead of another one. It won't be the first time this has happened to us."

Then I asked her how long she had been there.

"Oh, a long time," she answered. "Ever such a long time."

Then.

"Are you a doctor?" she asked me abruptly.

I glanced at her wounded arm.

"Oh, its' not for me that I'm asking," she said hastily, "it's for Katya."



"Katya?"

"She's my friend. She's in the truck, very ill. I've been nursing her for days. She's in the Markov Regiment, and I'm in the Alexeiev Regiment, but we were both at the front together, and we're good comrades."

"Well," I said, "you are lucky. I'm not a doctor, but as it happens, my companion in the truck is a doctor."

"An English doctor?"

"Yes, an English doctor."

"Bravo! Bravo! Thank God! Cheerio!" cried the little creature. (This is as close as I can render in English her absurd exclamations.) And she capered joyfully through the snow back to her truck.

I climbed into our truck, and explained to Capper what had happened to us and whom I had met.

Capper was amused and said he would go and have a look at Katya after breakfast. Then we remembered that we had neither food nor tea in our truck. All our stores were with our servants in the train from which we had somehow become detached. We looked at each other glumly for a moment.

"I think I'll pay my professional visit at once," said Capper.

We walked along to the other truck. Valya welcomed us joyfully and showed us her friend lying on an untidy heap of rags in a corner. Capper took the invalid's wrist, and asked her a few questions which I translated as well as I could.

Valya all the time stood by with a look of anguish and anxiety. Once she tried to approach her companion, but was repelled with a rough gesture by the elder girl. It was easy to see how the land lay. Valya was passionately attached to Katya, but the latter was only bored by her affection. Despite her illness one could see that Katya was an imperious and coquettish person, far more sophisticated than her friend.

We did not need to ask questions to see that they had no breakfast to offer us. Their truck was bare of food, ex-

cept for a few crusts mouldering in a dirty corner.

I left Capper with them and trudged off to the distant station. An astonished stationmaster rated his assistant for detaching us from the train and they both wondered gloomily what would happen when the Russian general, whose truck ought to have been shunted, returned from his involuntary journey up the line. I managed to buy a few rolls and a small and nasty chicken. When I got back to the girls' truck I found Capper examining their wounds.

"Would you believe it, Smith," he cried when he saw me, "this child has been wounded seven times!"

Valya, who guessed what he was talking about, raised seven fingers delightedly.

"Cheerio! Seven times! What a go! Cheerio!" she cried.

Then she became very serious. "Ask him what's the matter with Katya."

At Capper's dictation, I explained to Valya that it was impossible to say yet whether Katya had typhus or not. In any case she had a high fever and needed good looking after. The sooner she could be got down to Ekaterinodar, where there was at any rate a minimum of medical arrangements, the better chance she would have in the event of the dread but almost universal disease appearing.

After breakfast, which, for the convenience of the invalid, we ate in their truck, Valya and I walked over to the station, and, presuming on our joint authority, we arranged that the girls' truck should be hooked on to the next train going down the line, and ours on the next up train. There were still a few hours before we parted. Valya insisted upon our staying in her truck, where she hoped that our presence might help to divert the invalid, on whom, moreover, she could thus keep constant watch. She showed me her wounds without the slightest embarrassment, and we parted on the best of terms.

I never saw her again. But I heard about her from one or two chance



sources afterward. This was curious, because in Russia in those days once you lost sight of anyone you, as a rule, never heard of them again. As far as I could piece together the several accounts I heard, this is what happened to Valya after we kissed her good-bye on that lonely siding:

## II

THE two girls returned to Ekaterinodar that day, and Katya, already much weaker, was taken off to the hospital. It soon became evident that she had typhus.

The day after, Valya called at the hospital, intending to stay there and nurse her friend, but a doctor came out to her and told her sternly that under no circumstances was she to enter the place. The confusion, he said, was already great enough without the presence of amateur nurses to complicate it. So Valya, very crestfallen, went off back to the railway station. She found her truck after a search—it had been shunted all over the place—but it was now on the same siding as was a troop train under orders to proceed up the line again.

Valya thought matters over for a while. It would be weeks and weeks before Katya was well and about again, even if she did eventually get well. What was Valya to do in the meanwhile? Her latest wound in the hand was a sufficient reason for remaining where she was, and the disorganization of the Volunteer Army after the fall of Rostov was such that nobody at Headquarters was likely to have any useful work to give her. Besides, she had had enough experience of the staff to have the instinctive feeling that the further she kept away from it the better for everyone. She thought for a long time, but could come to no decision.

About midday she realized that she was very hungry, and she climbed out of the truck into the filth of the big station-yard at Ekaterinodar, and, like the sparrow she resembled, she looked round for the best place to get food. It was so long since she had received her army pay that she had become almost

expert in food-hunting. The troop train on the same siding immediately attracted her attention, and off she went to the officer's truck. In it she found a handsome young captain, to whom she introduced herself as Captain Valya —, of the Alexeiev Regiment. His good looks, his dark eyes and black mustache, took Valya's heart by storm. Even her customary audacity deserted her, and for a few minutes she forgot her eternal refrain of "Cheerio! Bravo! What a go! Nichevo!"

Kapelnikov—that was the officer's name—gave her some food, and, amused by the absurd young creature's vivacity, entered into a conversation with her, flattering her by using the tones and words of serious military conversation.

By the evening Valya was completely captivated. When she found out that Kapelnikov and his men were going up to the front the next day, she begged to be taken with them. The result was that Kapelnikov's orderly went along and cleaned out Valya's truck and moved his master's scanty kit into it as well. And in the middle of the night the troop-train, with Valya's truck at the rear, moved out northwards.

Kapelnikov had been a young subaltern in a Guard Regiment at the outbreak of the war with Germany. Wounded on the Russian front, he had afterward been transferred to the Caucasus. When the Russian armies broke up in 1917, he made his way, disguised as a soldier, to the house of a relative at Rostov. Here he had been mobilized by General Kornilov when the latter commenced his heroic campaign in the Kuban Steppe against the Bolsheviks. Ever since, Kapelnikov had been in the anti-Bolshevist forces; and, like all the others, he was war-weary, dull and miserable. He saw his life slipping away from him.

From other countries came news of peace celebrations and a gradual settling down to peace-time conditions. Only poor agonized Russia was still fighting, fighting. And in the worst of all wars—civil war. And he was a part of agonized Russia; he was an aching nerve



in that huge pain-distorted body! Now once again he had been ordered to the front. Once again he was to face shot and shell, and, worse still, the terrible scourge of frost and disease. It was no wonder that the coming of Valya pleased him. It was like a sparrow coming to play in a prisoner's cell.

A week or so after, they received orders to leave their train and march to a village a few score miles away from the railway.

The discomfort of that march is not to be told. The steppe was covered with thawing snow. You could not distinguish the road from the rest of that dirty, muddy gray-coloured plain. Their carts stuck in the mud for hours. The men, all weary to death of the campaign, were sullen and miserable.

Kapelnikov, trudging through the knee-deep slime, thought of pre-war days and fell into a sulky silence. Only Valya was imperturbable. She was perhaps more unfortunate than any of the others; her hand had not been dressed for days and this added to the other discomforts of the march. But she never complained. On the contrary, her gurgling laugh and her silly little exclamations never ceased. The soldiers alternately cursed and admired her.

They reached the Cossack village at last. There was the usual long street, along which wooden houses and huts straggled. There was the usual church at one end of the village. There was the usual mud. The roads were practically impassable; the only way to get from one house to another was by the greasy boards that were laid along the side.

Everything was in terrible disrepair. The peasants were in rags. Communication with the towns had practically ceased as a result of the unsettled state of the country. Everyone was sullen and unfriendly.

Kapelnikov sent for the headman of the village, produced his authority and ordered him to provide quarters and provisions for the company. The headman as usual declared that there was neither accommodation nor food in the

village, and was only brought to reason by Kapelnikov's threat to requisition both by force. With a poor grace a few dilapidated huts were pointed out for the accommodation of the soldiers and two rooms in the best house in the place were reserved for Kapelnikov and Valya.

The headman did not seem to know or care where the advancing Bolsheviks were. He cursed both them and the Volunteers with equal disgust, and ejaculated his yearning for the return of the good old times, when men could live their own lives in peace and comparative comfort.

Kapelnikov sent out a few scouts and set on others of his men to pump the villagers for information. He got very little. The only thing of which he became assured was that Bolshevik agents were at work in the village, inciting the men to desert to the advancing forces. Kapelnikov shrugged his shoulders when this news was brought to him by one of his agents, who, however, pretended not to know who the agents were or where they lodged.

Desertion, desertion, desertion! It was the old tale. Men deserted to the Bolsheviks today, deserted back to the Volunteers tomorrow; next week they would be back in the Bolshevik ranks, and before long you would see them again among the anti-Bolsheviks. All Russia was demoralized, worn out, exhausted in body and in mind. The look in men's eyes showed only what was bad in their nature; the good was drowned beneath the miseries of their lot.

Kapelnikov laughed angrily when he thought, as he sometimes did, of the hopes and ambition with which he had started his career. This was what he had come to—the command of a ragged and semi-mutinuous company in the dirtiest and most miserable locality he had ever seen, and his only companion Valya, a bedraggled little camp-follower!

Valya was quite happy. She scandalized the old men and women of the village by her clothes and her conversation. Some of the old women crossed themselves at the very sight of her.



They insulted her to her face, but she merely grinned and cried, "Bravo! Bravo! Cheerio!" and left them stupefied with astonishment.

And so Kapelnikov and his men and Valya passed day after day in that desolate village in the steppe.

### III

ONE day news arrived that the Bolshevik cavalry was coming closer. At the same time Kapelnikov heard that Rostov had been retaken by the Volunteers. Both pieces of information were true, as it happened. The Volunteers did retake Rostov for one day in February, 1920, but next day they were outflanked and had to withdraw.

Meanwhile the villagers, ever anxious to choose the more powerful side, became more and more hostile to the Volunteers. Kapelnikov's own men were getting out of hand. One night he was awakened by his only reliable spy, who had taken advantage of the darkness to come and warn him that the men had decided to go over in a body to the Bolsheviks, whose cavalry were now said to be not more than two days' march away. They had decided, the man said, to arrest Kapelnikov the following night and to win the confidence of the Bolsheviks by handing over to them him and Valya, a still more valuable prize. Valya came into the room during their talk and overheard most of it. When the man crept away cautiously, Kapelnikov and she began to consider what they should do.

Valya alone had a plan; Kapelnikov was too exhausted mentally to be able to propose anything. Valya suggested that they should leave their quarters at once, and make for a deserted hut she had discovered in a copse outside the village. Here they could hide for a few days until the position cleared up and then perhaps they would be able to get through to the railway; if necessary by a roundabout route through the Bolshevik lines.

Kapelnikov realized that it would be foolish of them to attempt to get through

to the railway now. As soon as they were missed, his mutinous troops would at once pursue them across the steppe to the railway. They might not even succeed in getting out of the village. In any case, Valya's plan would gain them a few days' respite.

They filled their pockets with scraps of bread and meat and slipped out by the back of the house. Valya knew the way to the deserted hut, and Kapelnikov let her guide him.

They did not make the mistake of going directly toward their hiding-place, lest someone should see them and tell their men on the morrow. Indeed, they made such a wide sweep round the village that it was almost dawn by the time that, exhausted and filthy, they reached the tumble-down barn where they were to hide.

The place was well chosen. From the outside it looked too ruined for even a beast to take refuge in it. A few mouldering trees made a partial screen for the entrance, and it was so far from the main village and so remote from the other huts that the fugitives would easily be able to leave it without attracting attention. The roof of the hut had long since fallen in. The walls had nearly all crumbled away. But in one angle there was a recess, hardly bigger than a dog-kennel, which Valya's eye selected for their hiding-place.

The hole was slimy and full of rotting leaves and mud. It was cold, wet and miserable. But it was at least half-sheltered from the snow and rain, and a little better than the open steppe.

Even Valya's good spirits almost deserted her when the struggling light revealed the horrors of the place. Kapelnikov was beyond caring; he was utterly weary of the whole business. They crowded into their kennel and ate one or two of the dirty crusts they had brought with them. Then with an effort Valya cried, "What a go! Cheerio!" But Kapelnikov did not smile, and she became silent.

She shouted with glee, however, about midday when the noise of cries and revolver shots in the village showed that



their escape had been discovered. She soon had the pleasure of seeing half a dozen soldiers and villagers start off in the direction of the railway. It was the search-party.

During the day they dared not leave their foul refuge. Only when darkness had fallen, they stretched their cramped limbs for a few minutes among the rotting trees.

The next day the advance guards of the Bolshevik cavalry entered the village, men as weary and ill-equipped as their opponents. The headman came out to meet them, with one of Kapelnikov's sergeants; and both declared their good-will and allegiance. The Bolshevik troops disappeared into the village, and requisitioned more quarters and more food from the villagers. Next day the main body of the force arrived, with a Commissar in charge, and Kapelnikov, who had found an admirable spy-hole in the hollow trunk of one of the trees, looked on ironically through his binoculars as the Commissar deposed the headman from his position and put one of the paupers of the village in his place.

The villagers went about their daily business as listlessly and sullenly as ever. The arrival of the Bolsheviks was to them only another phase of their misery.

For the next few days nothing changed. The search-party came back empty-handed, deciding that the two fugitives must have succeeded in reaching the railway with extraordinary speed. Anyhow, no search was made for them in the vicinity of the village. After all, there seemed to be nowhere for them to hide; no one thought of the derelict barn.

But the position of Valya and Kapelnikov was unenviable. Their crusts were almost exhausted. They had not eaten more than two or three mouthfuls a day, but even so nearly all the bread was gone. They had nothing to drink except the brackish and dirty pools of melted snow. They were indescribably filthy. Kapelnikov was sullen and silent. Poor Valya could scarcely ejacu-

late a "Nichevo! Cheerio!" from her little swollen mouth. Her bandaged arm was causing her excruciating pain. Her moaning annoyed Kapelnikov, although he knew she was doing her best to keep it back; indeed, it was only in the half-dazed moods that took the place of sleep that the pain obtained mastery over her.

One night Valya woke from one of these lapses of consciousness and found herself alone. She crawled out of the kennel, and called softly for Kapelnikov. There was no answer.

She searched for him a little while among the decayed trees, and then returned to the shelter. It was only after a couple of hours or more that Kapelnikov returned. He was reeling with weariness. Valya looked at him curiously, but decided that questions would only provoke his anger and decided to be silent.

When morning came, she took their last crust out of her pocket and gave it to him. He broke it in two, gave her half, and ravenously devoured his portion. When he had finished, he looked hungrily at her share, which she held untouched in her unbandaged hand. Without a word Valya handed it to him.

He stared at her with a strange look in which greed struggled with astonishment. She pointed to her swollen gums as if to say that eating was impossible for her, and then she characteristically poked out her tongue at him. He ate the bread, and Valya turned away, covering her face with her arm so as not to see him eating the food she coveted. Her teeth bit into her thin flesh, and tears rolled down her face. But Kapelnikov neither saw nor cared.

Again that night she found herself alone. This time he did not return. She waited anxiously, until at last it began to grow light.

Valya was terrified lest Kapelnikov was out walking in the neighbourhood of their refuge, and someone from the village should see him before he got back to safety. The pain from her arm was intolerable, and she craved for food.

She dozed off in a semi-delirium.



When she woke again, it was broad daylight. To her horror she heard voices. She recognised Kapelnikov's among them. What were they saying?

Kapelnikov was speaking. His voice was slow and uneven.

"This is the place," he was saying.

Horror turned Valya to stone.

She began to crawl clumsily from under the rotting beams that composed the roof of their shelter.

"This is the place," Kapelnikov's weak voice went on. "Now give me some bread."

"Not yet, friend," answered a loud voice. "Finish your side of the bargain first."

Valya scrambled to her feet outside the shelter just as Kapelnikov led the Bolshevik Commissar and his body-guard toward it.

"Aha, there she is!" said the Commissar, as Valya's tottering figure rose before them. "Here's your bread, Captain Judas!" And Kapelnikov, not daring to look at Valya, took the loaf that was held out to him and buried his teeth in it.

Valya swayed for a few moments, trying to get her balance.

The treachery of Kapelnikov penetrated her mind; her face was distorted like a crying baby's. The Commissar made a step towards her. Hastily she thrust her hand into her pocket.

"Look out," shouted the Commissar, "she's armed."

"Cheerio!" cried Valya, with an echo of her old voice. "Yes, I'm armed. Stand back!" she cried, as the Commissar made another step, and she pointed the revolver at him.

He stopped, undecided.

Kapelnikov was still gnawing the bread, which he held in both his hands. He dared not look in her direction.

Suddenly the Commissar and two or three of his men advanced upon her.

"Stand back," she cried again, and stopped them with a gesture of her revolver, which trembled in her weak left hand.

Then with a cracked laugh, she cried shrilly, "Cheerio! Bravo! Nichevo! What a go!" and turned the revolver toward herself. Waiting until the shaking barrel touched her head, she fired, and fell to the ground like a little bedraggled sparrow.

Kapelnikov went on eating the bread.



## Theme for an American Symphony

By Leonard Hall

I PLAYED Wagner's "Träume"

On the phonograph,  
But I could not hear the music  
For the clatter and roar  
Of the Fords in the street.





# Some Further Additions to the American Credo

*By Watkins Eppes Wright*

## I

THAT only a small percentage of Americans know more than a few lines of "The Star-Spangled Banner," and that they are so unfamiliar with the tune that they are always getting to their feet when the band plays "How Dry I Am."

## II

THAT if a man is asked the time of day immediately after looking at his watch he always has to look at it again before replying.

## III

THAT if one tries on a suit of clothes in a Jewish clothing store one is always told that it is a perfect fit, no matter if it hangs like a coat upon a rack or clings like the paper to the wall.

## IV

THAT old negro mammies, now fast becoming extinct, always refer to their "white folks" as "honey chile."

## V

THAT a piece of asafetida worn about the neck will ward off various diseases.

## VI

THAT drinking vinegar or the juice of a lemon will reduce one's weight.

## VII

THAT persons with exceedingly high foreheads are always possessed of remarkable intelligence.

## VIII

THAT when you've made up your

mind to have a tooth extracted it always stops aching just as you place your hand on the dentist's doorknob.

## IX

THAT in spite of the fact that all negroes make a great holiday of July the Fourth only about five per cent of them know why they are celebrating.

## X

THAT it is almost impossible to find a person living in New York who was born there.

## XI

THAT born and bred Virginians and South Carolinians are very proud of their origin and are given to excessive braggadocio.

## XII

THAT all negroes love funerals and circuses, and turn out in great numbers to attend them both, arrayed in their best clothes.

## XIII

THAT the quivering cry of a screech owl heard just outside a house is a sign that someone in the house will shortly die.

## XIV

THAT nowhere is such hospitality found as south of the Mason and Dixon line.

## XV

THAT a fortune-teller invariably says that you are going on a long journey, will cross water, and had better beware of a certain dark person who is trying to make trouble.



# The Good Chance

*By Thyra Samter Winslow*

MISS GREGSON was all dressed for dinner with the Howards. She looked at herself in the mirror of her small dressing-table and smiled timidly at the reflection. She was not vain, but she did so want to look well. It really was important.

She had done over her hair three separate times and, although the finished result was exactly what she generally attained with a tenth of the effort, she thought perhaps it did look a little better. Miss Gregson's hair was thin and of a lusterless brown and you could see a few gray hairs if you looked closely. She had shampooed it that morning with a henna preparation which had promised, in elegant Old English lettering on the container, to give "a wonderful red and gold gleam and the effect of natural fluffiness—"

Miss Gregson wanted to believe that the shampoo had fulfilled all of the promises to the last sentence of the five paragraphs devoted to its certain results. First, she had arranged her hair as always, parted a trifle to one side and rolled slightly over her ears. But she had tried to give an added impression of girlishness by pulling out the puffs a little and by flattening her hair, by means of invisible hairpins, over her forehead, which was too white and too high and even, perhaps, a trifle knobby.

To her hair she added, now, as a final triumph, a high back-comb, once the property of her Aunt May. It had contained several rows of brilliants, part of which were missing, but it was of the shape commonly designated as "Spanish," and Miss Gregson thought it added a needed touch of gaiety, almost of coquetry, to her costume.

She straightened the collar of her dress and pulled slightly at the shoulders and the sleeves. She rather believed it was becoming. It was her best dress and she thought it quite appropriate for this affair. It was going to be just "a home dinner," but Miss Gregson was not accustomed to more formal dining. The dress was of nondust-showing tan silk with thin sleeves. It was a "bought-ready-made" and had come from one of the lesser department stores which offer moderate prices in lieu of exclusiveness.

Miss Gregson and her mother, guided by the pins that the store's fitter had inserted free of charge, had adjusted the hem themselves, thus saving two dollars. But to gain a glory quite impossible of realization in a "ready-made," Miss Gregson had added a "different touch" by replacing the flimsy collar which had been on the dress when she bought it with one she thought was "real lace." It had been in the family for over forty years, had, in fact, been a gift to Mrs. Gregson from her mother as a part of her trousseau. Miss Gregson belonged to that large class of gentlefolk which believes that everything that is old is good and which cherishes innumerable useless things, an accumulation of left-overs from departed and quite frequently tasteless relatives.

Miss Gregson added a fleck more powder to her nose, rubbing most of it off with her clean handkerchief, touched her eyebrows and the lobes of her ears with toilet water—a touch she thought quite dainty—and looked at her watch, which she wore as always on a neat black ribbon around her neck and tucked into her belt.



It was time to go. She put on her small neat toque carefully, so as not to muss her hair, put on her coat, though the day was quite warm, taking care that the lace collar of her frock lay under it, unwrinkled. It seemed so indelicate to go out on the street coatless, especially in the evening. She looked into her neat, black purse to see if she had everything, care-fare, powder-puff and key. Miss Gregson's purse contained no frivolous silver or enameled toilet things nor unnecessary feminine trifles, save a few unneeded dress-goods samples she had accumulated a few weeks before, the card of a woman who had waited on her for blouses, and the new address of an old acquaintance.

All ready, white gloves held gingerly with her purse, she went into the living-room, where her mother sat reading.

"I'm all ready; guess I'll go, mother," she said.

"What time is it?"

"After six, and they eat at seven. And so many times the traffic holds things up. I'm going to take a bus."

"Yes, I would. It's only a nickel more and it's a nice ride."

"Mother, you'd better eat something right away. You know you always get a headache if you wait too long. There's that nice cold meat in the ice-box and two tomatoes and some lettuce for salad. You will, won't you?"

"Don't start worrying about me. I'll get along all right. Whose going to be there besides the Howards?"

"Only the Greenes, you know—Lillian Mullin—and, I think a friend of Fred Howard's, six, that's all."

"Have a good time. Will they bring you home?"

"I suppose someone will. I can come home alone if he—if they don't. It's only a block to walk on each side of the bus."

"Yes, that's right. Only be careful. You know the awful things you're always reading about people out alone at night—and a girl out all alone."

"I'll be careful. It isn't as if I were really a young girl, you know. There's

nothing to worry about. Now do eat something right away."

"I will. Have a good time."

"All right. Good-bye, mother."

"Good-bye, dear."

## II

MISS GREGSON left the house, closing the door carefully after her. She knew how her mother jumped if a door slammed. She hadn't told her mother how excited she was about dinner at the Howards nor why. Miss Gregson didn't tell her mother things like that, though in the past there had been nothing quite similar to tell. Mrs. Gregson was getting old and liked to talk mostly of when she was young and how things were changing these days, and not for the better.

Miss Gregson was thirty-four. She and her mother lived alone in the first-floor apartment of a decent brown-stone house in the West Nineties. They owned the house. The second and third floors of it formed two more apartments, the rents from which, after the upkeep and interest on the mortgage were subtracted, formed, with the addition of a small revenue derived from shares of stock, the entire income of Mrs. and Miss Gregson.

The income was lessened each year, for the Gregsons occasionally found it necessary to sell a share or two of the stock in order to pay necessary current expenses. But they had been able to raise the rents on the apartments, not, of course, enough to make them guilty of profiteering, they felt, but sufficient to make possible a decent and frugal livelihood.

Miss Gregson's father had died when she was twenty. Her one brother had died two years later. Neither she nor her mother approved of young women entering the business world, and, besides, her education at a semi-fashionable finishing school had not provided her with any adequate vocation and she had no talents of any kind. She had never had a suitor. In fact she had lacked all masculine attention. While



her brother was alive he brought friends home with him occasionally, but they had never paid the slightest attention to her. And after his death none of them continued to call. Dora Gregson spoke pleasantly to the butcher and the grocer's clerk and the ice man. Occasionally a salesman in a department store waited on her. She talked, impersonally, to the husbands of the women she knew. Outside of these times she never spoke to a man at all.

That is why she was so excited. She was not only going to meet a man, but the man was, from Natalie's account of him, "a good chance." Mrs. Howard, when she was Natalie Barker, had been one of Dora's best friends, from the days when they had attended Miss Rhodes' School. Both had been quiet and retiring and old-maidish even then. Until three years before, until after she was thirty, Natalie had been as devoid of masculine attendants as Dora. Then she had met—through a cousin of her mother—Fred Howard, a thin, sallow-faced man of most moderate circumstances, whose wife had died a few years before.

Howard liked to come home to a home-cooked meal, to find his socks, properly assorted and darned, waiting for him in neat balls in his dresser drawer, to sit near his library table and to read his paper at night with a wife on the other side of the table. So he and Natalie had married. Now, quite far out, on Washington Heights, you can get an awful good view of the Hudson from two rooms of their apartment on a clear day. . . . Amid new and glossy mahogany furniture the Howards were enjoying a comfortable domesticity.

Of course, as soon as Natalie married, she saw the necessity of Dora Gregson following her as quickly as possible into matrimony. Feeling that marriage proved beyond any possible argument that she possessed pronounced feminine charm, she adopted a pretty, matronly, patronizing air with Dora.

"Just wait," she would say. "Mr.

Right will come along yet, when you least expect him. I'm going to have my eyes open for him, too. You can't tell. I'll sort of hint to Fred. He knows so many men. He may know just the man for you. You'll have a good chance some time."

But Fred's acquaintances, it seemed, did not include a sprightly and comfortably fixed bachelor or widower who was bent on marrying a pleasant, if slightly prim and attenuated "girl" of thirty-something. Fred spent most of his evenings at home. The seed business did not offer extensive social possibilities.

Six months ago, however, when Natalie had telephoned to Dora to arrange a shopping trip, she had said that she had "perfectly wonderful news to tell you when I see you." The perfectly wonderful news had been Dora's first knowledge of the existence of Alger Bowes and a hint as to his marital possibilities.

"I haven't met him," said Natalie, "but Fred says he is a perfectly wonderful man, an awfully good chance. Fred says—you know how silly a man can be—that he doesn't want me to meet him because he'd be jealous, he's so good-looking. But of course he doesn't mean that. Mr. Bowes has been a friend of Fred's for years and years—just as we've been friends for years and years. Wouldn't it be romantic? But Mr. Bowes has been traveling for a shoe firm and has been in and out of New York all the time, so Fred hasn't seen much of him lately. Well, Tuesday he met Bowes at the What Will You Have Lunch Room; it's one of those places where you get a tray and go around picking out your own dishes. Fred likes to eat there because he can get just the things he wants; you know he suffers from indigestion and has to be awfully careful, unless he eats at home, when I can give him just what he wants.

"Well, he'd just got his tray over to his table and started putting it down when he heard a voice say, 'Well, if it isn't Fred Howard!' and there was Al-



ger Bowes. They had lunch together, and Fred says Bowes looks simply fine; he's gotten a little fleshier than he was and it's awfully becoming, Fred says. Well, Bowes wants to get off the road and settle down—wouldn't you hate to be a drummer and travel from one town to another nine months in the year?—though there is a lot of money in it, Fred says.

"Well, Bowes said by the first of the year he was going to locate in New York permanently, as assistant to the sales manager, an awfully good position. And Fred said to him, offhand, as if it didn't mean anything, but thinking of what he'd promised me about you, all the time, 'Not married yet, are you?' and Bowes said, 'Not yet, but after I get settled in New York I may look around a bit. I wouldn't mind a home of my own.' 'Greatest thing on earth,' Fred said he told him, and I guess he did, because you know how domestic Fred is. Then Fred said: 'Well, when you get settled, you let me know. My wife knows some dandy girls she'll be glad to introduce you to' and Bowes said that was fine, right-o."

That had been all of the news from Alger Bowes for a while, but it was enough to give Dora a pleasantly warm feeling whenever she thought of it. Life was no longer just a colourless attempt to make an inadequate income provide the most evident necessities and a few genteel comforts as well. Alger Bowes threw a glow over everything.

Natalie had first mentioned Bowes in December. But, contrary to expectations, Bowes did not leave "the road" in January as he had expected. Fred called at his office to find out and was told that Bowes was making a final circuit of his territory with the man who was ultimately to take his place.

Dora did not like business. She tried to believe that she had sprung from a stock wherein all of the masculine element were "professional people." She would have preferred marrying a doctor or a lawyer. But the family lawyer was an old man and married, and she

had never met any other lawyer—and the family doctor, though single, was old and had such elegant bedside manners that Dora had never been able to pierce through them. Bowes, after all, would have an important position, nearly a profession. To say nothing of the splendid income Fred had told Natalie he made.

As the months passed, Natalie brought delicious bits of news about Bowes. In April, Fred had telephoned to his office again and a week or so later Bowes had dropped in to see Fred and they had had lunch together again. And Bowes had said he was awfully anxious to meet Fred's wife—and some of her friends, too. But he was just in town for a week or ten days now, awfully busy. He'd be back in another month, to stay this time, and he'd let Fred know as soon as he returned. Yes, he'd be delighted to come out to the house for dinner.

In May, Fred had an illustrated postcard from Bowes from San Antonio, Texas, with "Will be back in town soon. Best regards to Mrs. Howard," written below the picture of a bank building.

Natalie brought the card for Dora to see. The reference to "Mrs. Howard" made it seem personal, as if Bowes was definitely considering the conjugal state and a "Mrs." of his own.

Then, just a few weeks ago, Natalie had telephoned to Dora to tell her that Bowes was in town, that Fred had seen him, that he had promised to come out to dinner the very first chance he had, and that he was quite, yes enthusiastically, willing to meet Miss Gregson, Mrs. Howard's best girl friend, of whom he had heard so much.

So Dora was going to meet Alger Bowes this very evening at seven. A rich bachelor who thought favourably of matrimony—a good chance!

Natalie had invited her, over the telephone, definitely, a week ago, after another chance encounter of Fred and Bowes, when Bowes had accepted Fred's dinner invitation. Natalie had repeated the invitation in person the



very next day, when she had called to explain the details to Dora. She had invited, too, Mr. and Mrs. Green. Lillian Green, *née* Mullin, was a cousin of Natalie, a pleasant enough, colorless person, a few years her junior. Ray Green was a pleasant enough fellow, and colourless, too. Having an extra couple would take away the effect of giving the dinner just so Dora and Bowes could get acquainted. It would make it almost a dinner party.

"I'm going to have Mrs. Wort to serve and do the dishes," Natalie went on. "You know, the woman who cleans for me; she's really very good. Of course I'll do the cooking myself. No, indeed, I wouldn't hear of your helping. I want you to look nice and—and fresh. Oh, it won't make any difference the way I look—an old married woman like me, though Fred seems to like me, no matter what I wear."

### III

DORA caught a Fifth Avenue bus at the corner. She wasn't used to being out at all in the evening, especially not alone, so she was glad it was still light.

She found a seat on top and sat next to a thin old man who tried to read a newspaper in spite of the jolting of the bus. She was glad she was seated next to an old man. Sometimes, she imagined, when she sat next to young men, on cars and buses and at the theater, that they jogged her elbow or sat too close to her. This didn't worry her exactly, but she found it rather unpleasant. The old man was safe enough.

How pleasant Riverside Drive looked! She knew it was considered rather newly rich to live on Riverside, but she liked the sound of the name. It would be awfully nice, in a shop, if she ordered anything, "Send it to Mrs. Alger Bowes, please, five hundred and something Riverside Drive."

Being married would be awfully pleasant. There were so many disadvantages in being single. Even now, when she ordered things, she sometimes

gave her mother's name instead of her own, so as to let the salespeople think she was married. Married, with a little apartment of her own! A new apartment with new furniture—of course she'd keep some of the best things, the old mahogany, good things like that—and have a new white kitchen and a really good maid and nice things to wear and no worries about money. Natalie would probably be jealous of her, if she had better things. Though, of course, Natalie would never forget that she had made the match. That, even, might keep her from being jealous.

The bus jerked its way uptown. She was going to meet Alger Bowes! Would they like each other, at first sight? She did hope Natalie and Fred wouldn't say anything silly or embarrassing. Of course, the Greens wouldn't suspect anything, would be glad enough to be invited for dinner.

Alger Bowes! Was he good-looking, she wondered. She would treat him, of course, as if he were just an ordinary acquaintance, but if he took for granted, right from the start, that they were—that it was all arranged—of course she couldn't do anything about that. Here she was, Dora Gregson, on her way to meet a man who had heard all about her and wanted to meet her. It all seemed strange and foreign and exciting.

She got off the bus at the right corner. In a doorway she added another touch of powder to her face, put on the white gloves and hurried to the Howard apartment. She wondered if she was late—her watch said fifteen minutes of seven—if Bowes had already arrived.

She rang the bell. Natalie, a big blue and white apron concealing her blue Georgette dress, greeted her.

"I'm so glad you got here before the Greens," she bubbled. "It's fine you came early. Put your hat and coat in my room on the bed. How do you like this bed-spread? Fred's sister in Michigan sent it to me. It's every stitch hand-made. Awfully pretty, isn't it?"



Oh, you'll be thinking about bedspreads, things like that, before long. Oh—he hasn't come yet. He's going by the office and come home with Fred; it's easier for him than finding the way alone. They'll be here any minute, now. I do hope you two take to each other. It's such a good chance. Fred says that—"

In the kitchen Natalie gave final instructions to Mrs. Wort, arranged a salad of lettuce, cucumbers and tomatoes and put the salad plates into the ice-box.

"Thank heavens I'm through," said Natalie. "I don't mind working hard before company comes, but after folks get here I always say I want to 'play lady.' Fred doesn't like to see me work hard, either. He says I do too much now. He'd get me a maid in a minute if I asked him, but with so many expenses. . . . Let's go in my room until the others come."

Natalie took off her apron and smoothed her hair and talked. Dora answered mechanically. She was worried just a little. She had pictured Bowes here already, safely and eagerly waiting for her. He hadn't arrived. What if he didn't come at all. What if—

The bell rang.

Dora waited in Natalie's room and heard Natalie answer the door.

It was the Greens. Lillian was twittering as usual in her high monotone; Ray was a bit too pleasant, the jolliness of a man about to be given a free dinner.

Natalie and Lillian came into the bedroom. Lillian kissed Dora and purred something about "wanting to come to see you for a long time, but you know how long it takes to get any place in New York. How is your dear mother? Isn't that splendid? Ray always says that he wishes we had a mother to live with us and cook real home dishes. I'm afraid I'm not really domestic. I simply can't learn to cook very well, though I try and try. I'm always sending in coupons for free cook books. Ray sometimes says—"

The Greens were there. It was after seven. What if Bowes—

There was a fumbling at the front door. The door opened. Masculine voices were heard. Natalie ran to the door. Dora heard Fred's voice introducing "my friend, Alger Bowes, Alger, my wife," Natalie's voice, cordial and exaggeratedly girlish, and Bowes' voice, comfortably deep and masculine. He had come! Would she be waiting, soon, evenings, for the sound of that voice? Of course it was ridiculous to think of that, really, but, if . . .

"Come on in the living-room, girls," said Natalie at the door. "I want you to meet Fred's friend."

They were in the tan-papered living-room, the glittering and too-large pieces of mahogany stiffly arranged in the small cubicle. Dora was greeting Fred, and Ray Green was shaking hands with Bowes!

He was a little fatter than she had expected, quite fat, in fact, and a bit red-faced, his nose slightly flattened at the end. Still, weren't fat men always considered good-natured? He wasn't at all bad-looking. Of course not. His hair was quite thin and straight and was parted in the center and brushed back stiffly at the sides. His eyes were small but kind-looking and his chin was fat and overhung his collar. Still, you wouldn't mind introducing him as—as "my husband, Mr. Bowes." What nonsense, of course—still, Fred had said, had told Natalie that Bowes—Dora hoped her hair looked well and that she hadn't put too much powder on her face in Natalie's room.

Bowes and Fred and Green talked about the political situation. The three women looked at one another and smiled. Natalie left the room, came back a minute later and announced that "dinner was ready."

They went into the dining-room, the three women first, followed by the three men. Natalie pointed to their places: "You sit there, Lillian, by Fred, and Dora on the other side of him, and Mr. Bowes, if you'll sit here by Miss Gregson. Ray, I hate to make you sit by



your own wife, but you know how hard it is to arrange six. I know you won't mind. I always say I actually believe Lillian and Ray are still fond of one another."

This last pleasantry was an attempt at daring and was appreciatively received as such.

The dinner started. There was tomato soup first. Dora suspected that it was canned, but she thought it quite good nevertheless. The small dining-room was warm. Natalie was the type who believed that certain things were necessary for a "good home dinner," and she never varied her selections no matter what the weather called for. "Good home dinners" always commenced with soup.

Dora tried to eat daintily. She held her spoon quite at the end and sipped just a little from the side of it, ladeling the soup carefully away from her. She wanted Bowes to see that she had awfully good table manners. She was a bit dismayed to find that he didn't notice how she was eating. He was enjoying his soup, evidently. He had tucked his napkin into his waistcoat. Dora didn't like that. She felt it wasn't exactly good form. Still, he was a fat man; maybe it was better. But she'd read, some place, that a wife can do a lot with a husband, if she starts right, at the beginning. Little habits like those—

Dora knew she ought to talk to Bowes, ought to say something witty and interesting. She had watched unmarried couples, out together, and the girl was always talking a great deal. She realized, almost in a panic, that she didn't know how to talk to men. She looked at Bowes. She couldn't think of a single thing to say to him.

The meat course followed the soup. Fred carved the large roast, after Ray and Lillian and Natalie had teased him a bit about his carving and predicted that he'd slide the whole thing onto the floor if he wasn't careful. Bowes said very little. Dora looked at him brightly once in a while, but didn't catch his eye. With the meat came mashed po-

tatoes, pears and carrots. Dora thought it a very nice dinner.

From the way Bowes ate, she knew he was enjoying it. She had picked up quite a lot of information about men, and one of these bits of knowledge was that, after a man has had an enjoyable meal, you can turn him around your finger. If he would only unbend a little, talk to her. If she could just be interesting! She studied his features as well as she could without staring, his fat cheeks, full of little red veins, his rather large, shapeless mouth. This wasn't the face she had imagined. It was entirely strange. Would it ever become really familiar to her, would she grow fond of it, even?

Bowes turned to Dora and said something about having known Fred for years and years. Dora told him, with a little, nervous giggle, that she had known Natalie for years and years, too. She thought that a good beginning. Then Bowes said that he was tired, had been "running his legs off all day," trying to see an out-of-town customer and then had missed him. Dora looked and expressed sympathy. She said: "Oh, that's too bad, Mr. Bowes. You must be tired. Men work so hard." She knew—hadn't she read, thousands of times?—that the way to interest a man is to let him talk about himself, to be interested in the things he liked.

"What business are you in?" Dora asked then.

Sure enough, between bites, Bowes told her a little about his business, lapsing into silence after a few sentences.

Dora couldn't think of another thing to say to Bowes, though she tried awfully hard. She must say something, right away. She tried the theater, then said: "Do you enjoy going to see good plays, Mr. Bowes?"

Bowes admitted that he did like good plays, when he was in a town that had them, and asked, "Have you seen 'Friendly Enemies'?" Dora hadn't. So she tried him with "Have you seen Ethel Barrymore in 'Déclassée'?" But he hadn't seen that, and, as Dora's visits to the theater had been infre-



quent, the conversation languished again.

Dora was glad when the conversation became general. They listened to stories of Lillian's washerwoman, "who wears my clothes every week and I know it," and the package Natalie lost and recovered, as if by magic, a whole week later.

Dora tried to think up something clever to tell so Bowes could see how entertaining she could be. Finally, she told about the young girl who had done some work for her a few weeks before. She thought that awfully funny, and, as it had really happened, she knew it wasn't like telling an old story everyone had heard. When the girl left, in order to establish easy communication with her, Dora had asked, "Have you a telephone at home?" and the girl had answered: "No'm, but we have a telephone book and we are saving up for electric lights." Everyone smiled kindly, but the story seemed flatter than she had hoped.

The salad came, Mrs. Wort taking the dishes away rather haphazardly and putting down the salad plates two at a time, one at the right and one at the left of the persons she served. Dora continued to eat daintily, nibbling at the salad. She had read that men disliked seeing women eat heartily. If Bowes would only look at her!

But Bowes didn't. Of course that was just his way. Perhaps he was bashful. Dora had read that men are usually shy, just big boys, really. She asked him several questions, as many as she could think of, and he answered courteously. The dinner was nearly over.

She wondered how it would seem being married to Bowes. Would she know what to say to him if they were married? He was so unlike the way she had pictured him. In her youth she had had a definite ideal. He was a handsome college boy then, who read a lot and who talked about all sorts of romantic things. Of course she had never met anyone like that. She had cut out a cover from the *Saturday Eve-*

*ning Post*, a young man, sweater-clad, accompanied by a bulldog and had mounted this on green mat-board and hung it in her room. Years ago she had thrown it away, but the memory remained, definite, pleasant. The ideal became older as the years passed, of course. Bowes, the fat salesman, did not fit into the picture. And yet Bowes was real, here at her side—

As Dora looked at Bowes, with little side glances, she abandoned her ideal altogether and knew that Bowes would make quite a satisfactory substitute. He wouldn't understand her subtler emotions. She wouldn't be able to tell him the little things she had always expected to tell her husband, though she couldn't think what they were just now. But he would always be pleasant and polite.

She saw herself waiting for him to come home to dinner, going to the theater with him. He was the type who, after he is married, would always be proud of his wife. She was surprised at her opportunity. Surely a man like Bowes could get a better-looking, more interesting, even a younger girl. And yet he was single, had expressed himself definitely to Fred as in favor of a home and marriage. It all seemed awfully nice. If she could only talk to him brightly and gayly!

Bowes volunteered only a few words, but answered promptly when Dora asked him questions, about the weather and "Do you like living in New York?"

Dora smiled at him, tried to establish a sort of friendship, but he seemed awfully distant, unapproachable. She wished she knew more about men and what to say to them. Women walking with men and at the theater always seemed to know what to say. What could she do now? She ought to be saying something. Anything but this silence.

Drug store "brick ice cream" and wafers followed the salad. There was no coffee. After the dessert they all went into the living-room, where it seemed a little cooler. Natalie put some new records on the Victrola, a lively



jazz, then a "classic" number, a song with violin accompaniment. As usual, the women looked vacantly into space with what they believed was a dreamy expression which would show their great love of good music, while the men looked bored. Then they all talked.

## IV

BOWES, it seemed, was "a great talker" when he got started. The dinner had satisfied him evidently. He leaned back now, in the larger of the two mulberry-velour-covered chairs and loosed a fund of traveling mens' anecdotes. They were all expurgated and some of them amusing. One or two bordered, ever so slightly, on the risqué and, at these, Natalie and Lillian giggled loudly.

Dora looked at the floor and felt she was blushing, hoped so, even. Bowes ought not to tell things like those, unless he really, well, was serious, she felt. Of course, he didn't mean anything, but, after all, she was the only single girl present.

At a quarter of ten the Greens rose to go. There was a little Miss Green at home, Lillian explained to Bowes, and the woman hired for the evening might disappear, like as not, and leave her all alone if they didn't get back early.

After the elaborate leavetakings were over, Dora said that she, too, must be going.

"Sit down, sit down," said Fred heartily, "what's your hurry? The evening's just begun."

"Don't go, honey," begged Natalie prettily, "we're having such a good time."

Bowes continued his stories. Of course, he didn't tell them just to her exactly, but it seemed pleasant, the four of them there, laughing and friendly.

Bowes made the next move.

"Got to go," he said, "wish I could stay longer, but I got to try to capture the customer I missed today, first thing in the morning, or he'll get away sure.

Sorry I have to beat it. You're certainly fixed up nice here, Fred."

Dora sat, stupefied, dulled with a new feeling, almost a horror. She couldn't say, now, that she was going. He hadn't asked to take her home—wasn't going to take her home—hadn't made an engagement with her—hadn't talked to her, even.

She had to sit there, quietly. She tried to appear indifferent. Maybe Natalie or Fred—maybe Bowes was waiting for them to say something. Natalie fluttered around Bowes pleasantly, told him how glad she was he had come, urged another visit. Fred got his hat for him. Bowes shook hands with Dora, told her he was "awfully glad to have made your acquaintance," shook hands with Natalie, said, "had a great evening, this domesticity certainly looks great to an old bachelor." Fred would walk to the car with him—the door closed, Bowes was gone.

"I've got to go, too, it's awfully late," said Dora, and went into Natalie's room.

Natalie's duties as a hostess had robbed her of most of her energy. It was after ten. Simple as the dinner had been, Natalie had been busy with it several hours in the afternoon, besides having the worry of "everything turning out all right." She felt, too, that her plans for Dora and Bowes had not progressed just as they should. Still, Fred would tell her more about that when he returned. You can't always tell by the way a man acts.

"Wasn't Mr. Bowes nice?" she asked brightly, "I don't see how he can remember all those funny stories. What a memory he must have. Fred says he's a great business man, and that he makes friends wherever he goes, just like he did tonight. You saw how he was the center of things after dinner. I was going to ask him to take you home, but when he said how tired he was . . . There's Fred back. I'll let him in."

Natalie ran out of the room, opened the hall door for Fred. Fred and Nat-



alie went into the living room together. Dora could hear them talking in undertones as she put on her hat. She went into the hall. Fred and Natalie joined her there.

"You sure you aren't afraid to go home alone?" Natalie asked, "you know Fred wouldn't mind."

Dora, knowing how much Fred would mind, for it was a long trip and Fred had to get up early, said she wouldn't hear of such a thing. Natalie, Fred's arm around her, seemed aloof, indifferent, completely "a little married woman."

"I've had an awfully nice time," Dora said.

"Awfully glad to have had you," Natalie smiled, politely.

"Sorry you and Bowes didn't hit it off better," said Fred, "he—he just told me he's going back on the road. Fellows like that get used to travelling around—"

Dora hurried the dark block to the bus. So she was going home alone. What did she care? Why, she hadn't even liked Bowes nor his funny stories.

Fat and red-faced and flat-nosed! Ugh!

Yet Dora knew that, if Bowes had liked her, she would have overlooked his stupidity and his red face.

Suddenly she grew unaccountably angry at Natalie and Natalie's presumption that she was so eager for matrimony because Natalie had been, and at Fred's pompousness in trying to "fix things up." How dared Natalie plan things so vulgarly for her! She had other things, higher things—books, music—didn't have to be married in order to get along.

A bus lumbered up and she scrambled aboard. It was not crowded now and she had a seat all to herself.

Across the aisle was a stockily built man with grey hair and thick, but regular, features. Now, he was a thousand times better looking than Bowes, nicer in every way, Dora thought. Maybe he was already married and of course she would never meet him—but—if something did happen and they should get acquainted . . ."



## Your House

*By George O'Neil*

IF May should come, years later, to your house  
And find the maples and the poplars torn,  
The vine grown covetous of all the boughs,  
And all the garden and the field forlorn,—

May there be someone with a wistful heart  
And with a spirit kindred to our own,  
To stand there dreaming and to dream a part  
Of our youth . . . and the dreaming we have known . . .

When the white walls are crooked with decay,  
When the green shutters shall be swung no more,  
Who will imagine how we passed one day  
Beneath a gash of roses at your door?



# Vigil

*By Joseph Upper*

## I.

FROM her lonely corner she watched him at his dressing. When he was ready to go, she laid aside her book, rose and moved towards him inquiringly.

"I'll probably be back," he said.

She nodded, smiling. Sometimes she wondered how she was able to bear the pain. It hurt her so to smile.

"You have your key?" He exhibited it with some others on a ring. She smiled again. "Then come back when you are ready."

He replaced the keys in his pocket and took his hat.

"Don't worry, old dear," he said. "There won't anything happen that hasn't happened before."

He laughed and put his hands on her shoulders. She looked into his eyes and smiled. There was something diabolical in his eyes that bruised her.

"Nothing will happen," she said, but the icy waters of fear were rising in her thoughts. She put her arms about him and hid her face on his breast to conceal her tears. His hand caressed her shoulder aimlessly, absently. When he caressed her, she thought of strange pencil marks on telephone scratchpads. It was something to do while waiting for a number. Sometimes she had observed people deep in speculative conversation make similar marks on any stray bit of paper that was near at hand. She believed she had even done so herself once or twice in a rather difficult conversation with him.

She thought sometimes that she was never so far away from him as when

in his embrace. When she caressed him, it was like dropping precious stones into the sea. The waters rolled over them and she never knew where they went.

Generally, he merely permitted her to kiss him; and after she had done so and there was no emotional response she would be furiously angry with herself and furiously angry with him. She felt then as though she would like to hurt him. Time after time she determined never to kiss him again, but she always did. His lips drew her irresistibly, always with the hope that he would answer, but she invariably experienced only the same silent rebuff.

Once or twice indeed he had answered her, and those moments had engendered memories which she always treasured. She would often lie awake at night and call them back to her and handle them in her thoughts as one handles the garments of a dead child. But even then she knew that it was not love. It was rather a great momentary pity that swept her suddenly into the light of its infinite comprehension and as suddenly left her in the darkness of its deep regret. Still she welcomed it, even though it finally abandoned her to her bitterness. It at least had its moment of exaltation, its instant of ecstatic illusion.

He waited patiently for her to release him. Her anger burned away the tears she had sought to hide. She wanted to fasten her fingers about his throat, to squeeze and squeeze until he should lay violent hands on her in defense or retaliation. But she smiled at him and let him go.



"Don't wait up for me," he cautioned her. "You know I might not be in."

She watched him from the window until he was out of sight.

## II.

HE had married her partly from gratitude, partly because there was nothing else that he particularly wanted to do. He had not loved her, had not pretended to, and she had known it. Why did she let him do it?

She asked herself the question over and over; and over and over she gave herself the answer. She loved him and she wanted him, and she thought that their marriage, even in the face of his indifference, offered a chance to win his love in return. But she was beginning to realize now how slight that chance really was. Theirs was not actually a marriage, but rather a domestic partnership. They ate and slept and paid the rent together. She mended his things and kept their three rooms clean and tried to give them a homelike atmosphere.

They both worked in the big hospital over on the hill. It overshadowed their domesticity, for they could always see it from the windows of their rooms. She looked out at it now as she sat by the window, and thought how much a part of both of them it was. She had met him there and loved him. It was there that her patient tenderness had nursed him through long nights and days of stupor, derelium and convalescence. It was after the convalescence that they were married and took these three rooms in the white house down the road.

He resumed his work and after a time she, too, went back and became a part of the grim place, ministering again to her family of the insane. So they had both worked on much the same as formerly except that now they lived together in the three rooms on the second floor of the white house, and ate and slept together, and their money paid the rent.

Almost as soon as it was done, it

seemed to her that he regretted it. It was as though he realized that he had done her an injustice by giving her the nominal possession of something which she could never hope to have in its entirety.

As the days went by, she grew accustomed to the strange relation, always cherishing in the depths of her mind the hope that he would come to care. But the hope went hand in hand with fear. If he was not hers, there was always the danger that he might be taken from her. Perhaps even now it was being done. She did not know where he had gone, when he would return. His words came back to her with ominous clearness.

"There won't anything happen that hasn't happened before."

Her hands grasped the sides of the chair in an agony of doubt, suspicion and helplessness. She rose and began to pace up and down the room.

There were women in town whom he knew, whom he had known before he married her. Perhaps one of them—or had he only said what he did in order to remind her of his detached position, to stunt and break down the delusional hope within her?

It wasn't the thought of what might happen that weighed upon her. It was the consciousness that she had failed to render such happening impossible. If he cared, genuinely and intensely, as she did, nothing would, nothing could, happen. But she knew that he did not, and a kind of rage burned within her when she conjectured where he might be, whom he might be with.

It wasn't jealousy exactly—not any conventional jealousy. She felt no anger towards these other women. She felt no special anger against him. It was herself with whom she was furious. She rebelled at her own limitations, her lack of charm, her deficient physical appeal. If only he could look *into* instead of *at* her, surely he would know that her love must be answered.

But there was nothing she could do now but wait, and while she waited she must fill the time. She went about her



work mechanically. Her thoughts followed *him* into the city, met him there in the guise of another woman, and went with him—where? Where did they go—people like that? Her thoughts stopped and came back to the three rooms in the small white house by the road.

When her work was done, she sat by the window again and looked out at the still world. It was as still and perfect as her love for *him*, and yet people did not appreciate it. They went madly into the city to the theaters, the movies, the dance halls, the wrestling matches. Or they lounged on the busy corners or walked the streets when they could have the calm joy of the country and the peace of God. But they were blind to the beauty of simple, natural things, and they rushed away from them just as *he* had rushed away.

As the evening wore on she tried to read, and then she tried to sew, but there was no forgetfulness in either one.

Finally she made ready for bed and lay down to wait until he should return. From where she lay she could see a square of night-blue sky framed by the window, and she counted four burning stars in the small space. They looked as though they were neglected, too, despite the fact that they shone so brightly and that there were four of them. The world had forgotten them as it had forgotten other natural and beautiful things, and they were left in their shining solitude to wait for the millennium.

She thought of *him* again and wondered where he was. The night seemed to be a part of the profound stillness that filled her waiting spirit.

The hurried ticking of their little clock came to her from the shadows.

### III.

SHE started up with the sudden knowledge that she had been asleep. But it was just as well. If he had come in and found her sleeping, he knew that she had taken him at his word. But perhaps he had not come in. She

turned eagerly, hoping to see the familiar form beside her. But he was not there. She could only have slept a little while then. She would get up and read some more so as to be waiting to greet him when he came in. Perhaps he would tell her where he had been. And if he did, would she believe him? She thought she would. He had no reason to lie to her. He could be frank and brutal about it if he wished. She already knew he did not care. But he would want to spare her, and so he would say nothing. Then she would know that——

She threw on her dressing gown and reached for the light over the bed. She felt for it blindly, for her eyes were turned in the direction of the clock. She could hear it ticking in the darkness.

When she saw the hour, she stood staring before her in a daze. It was three in the morning. She had slept a long time, then. And he had not returned. Three o'clock. He would certainly not be in now. He had stayed somewhere—where? His words recurred to her. All the old fear leaped up in her heart.

"Nothing will happen that hasn't happened before."

Then she had failed, utterly. He was being drawn back into the old maelstrom, away from her. It would only be a question of time before he would leave her altogether.

She walked to the chair by the window and sat down, looking out at the queer light. A damp breeze ruffled the lace about the neck of her dressing gown. Somewhere in the far distance a train whistled as it rushed through the dull hours between night and morning.

It was a fallacy, then, this idea of the spiritual power of love. There was nothing but the flesh after all. Charming manners and good looks did it all. She had failed, utterly.

For hours she sat staring out at the dismal landscape. Finally she went back to bed. She couldn't cry. Something within her was too dry and with-



ered to evoke tears. She felt like an old woman. She slept at last, her exhausted hopes dragging her down into the regions of forgetfulness.

#### IV.

WHEN she came home from her work the next evening, he was there. She listened to his account of an unexpected automobile trip with some friends whom he met in town. They had had a breakdown in a distant village and he was obliged to stay all night at an inn.

She wondered if it were the truth; who his friends were; the exact circumstances under which he spent the night; but she dared not ask. After all, he had come back. She had him still. He was here. Perhaps—there was still a chance to win.

She put her arms about him as she had done the night before, only this time she lifted her face to his, and to her surprise he answered her. His arms closed about her and he met her lips in a long, hard kiss.

As she went about her preparations for dinner, she wondered whether he had kissed her from a great pity, or to allay her suspicion, or whether he really did see in her occasionally something that he was loath to leave, that he had never found in the other women whom he knew. But it didn't matter. He had kissed her. She had him with her again. In time doubtless he would leave her for good, but that time was not so very near. And it might be that after all—anyway she would make the most of her slender happiness while it lasted. No one could do any more than that.



## Note On a Fly-Leaf of Holy Writ

*By Paul Arthur Yawitz*

WHEN I was sixteen my ambitious parents encouraged my association with girls. Now that I am sixty my precautions children warn me against it. I have searched zealously but nowhere in the Ten Commandments is one admonished to obey his children. So I shall continue to honour my parents.



A HAPPY man is he who early in his career learns to discriminate between the various types of women and then later realizes the futility of discrimination.



NO man becomes a really first-rate liar until he has been in love at least three times and married at least once.





# The Ugliest Woman on the Boardwalk

*By L. M. Hussey*

## I

HE had been oblivious to the young girls because they would suggest, in a measure, his unhappy romance. His grief was scarcely sentimental in the customary sense, yet he wished to avoid the evocation of old memories. In any pretty woman he might have found something to bring up the dead illusion that, however dead, could never be wholly without its tormenting ghosts. In a pretty woman he would doubtless have discovered a reminiscence, a smile, a lowering of fringed eyelids, a graceful gesture, and these recollections he wished to avoid.

Yet when that startling woman, that gaudy and incredible spectre, smiled at him, he was surprised out of his indifference and out of his restraint. They met in the evening; a few unconventional bathers were still on the sands or running out into the surf, but already it was late enough for the crowds to begin their nocturnal melting away. He saw her standing apart and since she looked directly into his face, there was no question that her smile was intended for him.

His surprise was immediate. Her ghastly person was evident in the first swift glance. She stood outside a Japanese shop and the light from within the shop came out and enveloped her without mercy.

Duncan was spelled by her ugliness as if she were a Medusa. He found her courage not less astonishing, for how could she be unaware of her own frightful face and figure, and if she were

aware of it, how could she smile at any man and expect his response? Suddenly it seemed to him that her smile was an act of rare courage, but a sort of courage that was scarcely natural, and so he felt a little thrill, such as one might in witnessing an unnatural act.

If she had been only moderately homely he could have passed on, he could have ignored her. It was the superlative in the order of her ugliness that made it impossible to ignore her. He felt it impossible not to acknowledge her smile and with a touch of fixity about his lips, like one who forces a conventional gesture in a moment of profound emotion, he smiled in return.

At once she crossed the Boardwalk and began to speak to him. There was nothing redeeming in her voice, for it hung on a thread, tenuous, small, yet penetrating, like a cracked falsetto.

"How do you do?" she said, offering her hand awkwardly.

"Good evening," replied Duncan, gravely.

For an instant she twitched her head nervously, like a gaunt sparrow, as if her words were sticking in her throat and she hoped to wring them out by twisting the ropy column of her neck.

"There's no use pretending," she exclaimed, suddenly. "I don't really know you, but I pretended I did. I might as well tell the truth now; I never really saw you before."

Duncan was silent; she elaborated volubly.

"My idea was to make you think you'd



met me somewhere and then of course you'd have been too polite to ask me who I was—but somehow I can't do it."

Duncan was curious and he found himself willing to talk with her, for she was unique in his experience, the extreme of all the women he had known.

He bowed a little and smiled now with a touch of affability. He held out his hand, which she seized with an eager suddenness.

"I'm glad you tried the experiment anyway," he said. "I was bored walking up and down here alone, and wanted somebody to talk to. Perhaps you felt the same?"

She nodded instantly, like an amateur actor pouncing, at the voice of the prompter, upon a forgotten cue. She thrust her arm under his and he found himself being carried off along the Boardwalk. Although he was tall, she ranged several inches above him. He became conscious of the grotesque picture they made and he was sorry for her response to his smile and ashamed that he had yielded to her nightmarish blandishments.

In a moment, however, his shrinking disappeared. It was late, the crowds were nearly gone and in a measure the night concealed both his companion and himself.

"Where are we going?" he asked, with a touch of irony.

She did not appreciate the irony, but replied with a literal frankness.

"I don't know," she said. "It doesn't make any difference, I guess. If people are congenial they can get acquainted most anywhere, it doesn't matter where. I'm down here to have a good time—the time of my life!"

Her last statement was spoken with a vehemence that made it effective and convincing. Duncan, whose curiosity already existed, found himself more curious; he sensed an interest in this woman that made him forget his distaste for her nearness and he was less shocked by her fabulous person. He found himself indifferent to what anyone might think of him, to the laughter they might arouse together.

"Are you hungry?" he asked. "Let us stop at one of these restaurants and have a bit of something before it is too late. We can talk better over a table anyway . . ."

She pressed his arm with her own, and her sharp elbow forced itself painfully into his side, so that he almost exclaimed. Her delight was evident and extravagant.

"That's fine!" she cried in her tenuous, cracked falsetto. "That's the life!"

He was afraid for the moment that she would kick up her heels in the exuberance of her absurd pleasure, but she quieted in a moment and walked along with what decorum he could expect.

## II

HE chose an unostentatious place and a remote table but it was nevertheless necessary to pass through an aisle of surprised eyes; the very solemnity of their waiter was in itself an expression of surprise. Here and there he could hear a giggle.

Now, in the restaurant, with the lights shining on her and revealing her adequately, he had his first full opportunity to study her grotesque person.

She sat uncomfortably in her chair, now leaning back, now coming forward over the table as if she were about to fall into the dishes. Her eyes, almost without lashes, blinked in the light and coquetted appallingly with his own. Her knobby hands fumbled with her knife and fork, with her napkin, with the edges of the table cloth. In the beginning she checked an impulse to push her napkin in at the V of her dress.

Her cheeks were hollow, her cheekbones were promontories, shiny and red. She had scarcely any hair, but what there was she wore in artificial waves, thin and petrified. It was a dull red, like the colour of dried leaves. Because she lacked eyelashes her reddish-brown eyes seemed always to stare. She had a long, thin nose, jutting out like a sharp ridge in the center of her face. Her lips were very thin, wide and gro-



tesquely rouged. She was extravagantly tall. Her body was as angular as a geometrical figure.

As Duncan regarded her she talked and his lack of interest did not seem to trouble her. He scarcely heard all she said because his faculties were taken up with his scrutiny of the astonishing unloveliness that still spelled him as a perfection of beauty might. He gathered, however, that she was alone here, that she had run off from somewhere, that she was enacting what she regarded as a stupendous adventure.

In those moments her words conveyed no definite reality since she herself was so unreal.

He continued to look at her and for a time she still talked but finally his scrutiny seemed to affect her, for her volubility grew less and he was suddenly aware that her awkwardness was enhanced; her hands fluttered nervously about her plate like ridiculous birds, plucked of their feathers. He dropped his eyes; she was silent.

"I want to show you something," she said at last.

Her hands dived down into her lap and fumbled with her large flowered handbag, from which she drew out a little, oval photograph, framed in imitation gold.

"I carried this off with me when I left," she said nervously. "Look at it."

She thrust the photograph across the table and Duncan took it into his hands.

It was the picture of a young girl, whose expression was naïve and sweet. She was not entirely pretty, for her features were not sufficiently regular; her nose was a trifle large, her face a touch too long. Yet the pictured face had its distinct appeal, the appeal that is often inherent in a thing that is young.

Duncan raised his eyes questioningly.

He found that the gargoyle was frowning, a curious frown that expressed an obscure regret. In some swift way it touched him as he saw it.

"Of course you don't recognize me!" she muttered.

In saying this, he found, her manner had undergone a change, and in that in-

stant she had grown more real. For that moment, at least, she seemed to have abandoned her coquettish flippancy, an incongruity of demeanour that had made her fabulous; now she was no more than an astonishingly ugly woman with whom, in some fashion, Duncan found himself acquainted.

"I was only seventeen when that was taken," she explained.

Her explanation was given with a touch of vehemence, as if to emphasize its truth, as if she expected to be disbelieved, being fully aware of her present state, the measureless change in herself.

But Duncan believed her, he saw the vague, yet convincing, resemblance between the pictured face and the face of the metamorphosed woman in front of him. It was an astonishing contrast, a strange study in decay, and he found his curiosity given another urge.

He discovered nothing to say and the woman herself was silent. The waiter came and stood near their table and Duncan asked for the cheque. He paid it and they went out together, whilst those still remaining at their tables stared after them as if they were a notorious pair fresh from a scandalous enterprise.

Out on the Boardwalk she regained, by an apparent effort, something of her former ridiculous manner. She took Duncan's arm, crowded up close to him, ogled him with her startling eyes, laughed significantly at his words when they held no significance.

Duncan suggested that it was late and that he would take her to her hotel and say good-night. She agreed with an artificial smile that was ghastly in the night, like the broad grin on a death mask. They walked on for a while until they passed in front of the place where she was rooming.

She held Duncan's hand fervently.

"It's been *delightful* to know you," she said, with an absurd emphasis, an emphasis that implied a secret understanding, a plot, an intrigue. "I hope you're staying at the shore for some time yet?"



"I don't know," he answered, dubiously.

"At least I'll see you tomorrow?"

For a moment he did not answer. He imagined the picture of himself attended by this creature, this Medusa in everything but the dignity of a fateful face, and he saw himself walking with her in the daylight when all the crowds could look at him and laugh openly. He shrank sensitively from the ordeal.

In another instant he found the shrinking foolish. He had no concern with anyone in the crowd and found their possible laughter without significance. In the pain that his heart could not suppress he was divorced from everyone who laughed, for whatever cause. He was surprised, indeed, to find that he could be curious, for it pleased him to imagine that all emotions had gone with his illusions, leaving him like a man who has been magically emptied of inner things. But he was curious, and so he nodded and told her that he would see her the following day.

The woman said good-night, laughed with the cackle of a frightened hen, and as a last word, repeated one of her former statements.

"I'm here for the time of my life!" she cried, shrilly.

Duncan turned, retracing his steps along the way that led to his hotel. He heard someone walking behind him and looking back found that a man in what seemed to be very baggy clothes was tramping along twenty or thirty yards in back. For an instant it occurred to him that the woman had disguised herself in these baggy clothes and was masquerading behind him, but he saw the absurdity of his thought and admitted that her unloveliness had turned his head a bit.

He mounted the steps of his hotel, wheeled sharply, and saw the man in the badly fitting clothes go shuffling by, lifting his feet as if the shoes he wore were weighted and a burden.

Duncan went up to his room and there for a while, before he prepared for sleep, he thought of his wife, from whom he had been separated just a month now. It occurred to him that

sophistication had been no armour to save him from the defeat of lost illusions. When he had found his love he had found it with the doubts of one who disbelieved in romantic realities, but they charmed him nevertheless and he had accepted romance as if it were a game, full of delightful unreality. Yet to be in love had become real, he found, and now it was over and there remained the tormenting memories of emotions as profound as the sky and as evanescent as the clouds. Before he went to sleep he lost his regrets in speculations about the gargoyle.

### III

THE next day he saw her in the sunlight, which was merciless. At night she had had something of the justification of a spectre, for spectres move about in the night. In the sunlight she was without place. Her clothes made a travesty of her face and figure; they were youthful clothes, the summery dress of a young girl with ruffles and coloured stampings. Duncan found her horrible and horribly interesting.

She began to talk of the people she knew and said that she hated low people, but enjoyed people of Duncan's sort.

"I didn't spend my whole life in the country," she said.

Duncan had chosen a relatively secluded spot under one of the pavilions. They sat down in the sand and he questioned her.

"You live in the country?"

"I did . . ."

He waited; she began to amplify with her customary volubility.

"Don't think I was born a jaw; I wasn't any country girl. I was young and silly like young people are, but Warren looked different then than he does now. I didn't imagine what I was getting into . . ."

She unfolded her story in a circumlocutory manner, but Duncan began to understand and as he understood she became more and more humanized in his eyes. Her reality grew, softening her



angular body and making her face less grotesque.

He had seen the little photograph and he was able, now, to vision her as a young girl, with a sweetness that was equivalent to prettiness; it was suddenly apparent to him that when the young man whom she called Warren had come to her she had received him with the illusions that are the common property of all that are young; he had made her dream and invested her future in a glamorous dress that was real, that held no colour of doubt. Duncan's sympathy went further, and he saw that the boy Warren must have had his dreams too, and believed, like the girl, in the eternity of a moment.

The boy had come to the city from the country, and when his father died he went back to the farm that was now his own; at this time they were married.

The crudity of the struggle that followed conquered their dreams, although the woman, telling her story, did not tell it in these words: her words were bitter and resentful.

She resented the memory of years of work, an endless procession of days without variation to the routine of their trivial and exhausting tasks. The only punctuation in these years was found in the weeks when she lay in bed after each successive childbirth. She forgot everything but the immediate necessities, forgot about the clothes she had once wanted, the little things she had desired, the comforts she had imagined. The only memory of her charm was found in the photograph framed in imitation gold, the one she had carried away with her in her flight.

"Three weeks ago," she said, "my youngest boy left school and went to work. That was the last—they're all working now. I've been saving up for more than four years. I took my money and packed up my things, and went away early in the morning. I'd told Warren time and time again that he'd wake up some day and find me gone; I wasn't going to live all my life that way! I'm away from it! I don't know what I'll do, but I'm going to find some

fun. Lord! I deserve some fun!"

She expanded upon her vague expectations like a child telling its future purposes and Duncan watched her gravely. For a moment, in his incredulity and wonder, he felt that he would have to question her, ask her definitely what was the life she expected to find, what was the life she had run away to discover. It came to him she had run away from the only reality she could ever know and that anywhere else she would find an overwhelmed unreality; that every fact and every hope of life was forever beyond her grasp save only the fact and reality of her degradation.

But he could not ask her this, or tell her his thoughts, for he saw at the same time that she was in a second childhood of credulity and belief, and as incredulous of defeat as a child. With a shock of discovery he found himself in sympathy with her, and wondered if he would go on, losing, with the hastening years, all possibilities of glamorous fulfilments, and in the end believe again and make a mad quest of illusions. It seemed possible; and he was afraid, as if something physical had given him the fear.

They got up from the sands at last and rejoined the crowds moving back and forth along the Boardwalk. Again Duncan took her to the hotel, parting from her but agreeing to see her again in the evening. He was not aware why he agreed to this, for she was no longer mysterious, no longer even grotesque and interesting because of her grotesquery, but only pathetic. She made him uncomfortable; her fate was almost prophetic, he thought.

As he went back to dinner in his own hotel he was surprised with the discovery that the badly dressed man whom he had observed the night before was nearby in the crowd and Duncan wondered if the fellow were really following him. He had no chance to see his face, and this was lost in the crowd before Duncan had an opportunity to scrutinize him. During the course of dinner he forgot about this fellow, who was unconnected with any of his thoughts, and after dinner he went to



find the woman, whom he felt he would see now for the last time.

They walked together to one of the long piers and there they sat and for a time listened to the band and watched the crowd dancing. Both were rather silent, but in the end the woman resumed her abominably artificial manner and, grinning once more, touched Duncan's arm in her conspiratorial way.

"It's very slow here," she said. "Let's have a little party together."

He looked at her inquiringly, half wonderingly. She believed in her pretense, she might even believe that she was charming him!

"Let's go back to the hotel," she said, whispering now. "I've the things in my room and we can make some cocktails. That's better than sitting here."

He got up and followed her mechanically, wondering where she had heard of cocktails, wondering if she knew what a cocktail was, and what sort she would make. He felt uncomfortable about going into the hotel with her, but she entered flamboyantly, as if she were proclaiming a secret sin of which she was proud.

Her room was piled up with dresses, extravagant clothes, flowered, and coloured, and gay. She had to take a dress from one of the chairs to provide him with a place to sit down. Then she produced bottles from a closet and in a moment he found her shaking up a mixture and pouring it into two glasses on a small table near her bed.

He took up the glass and sipped the mixture, wondering if it were real. He seemed in a dream then; *she* could not be real, with the extravagance of her hopes, her unreal quest!

He emptied his glass, she emptied hers, and both were returned to the table. She was sitting on the edge of the bed and he was seated near the little table. She leaned over and laid her hand upon his. He did not move, he said nothing, her hand touched his and he scarcely understood then the familiarity of her gesture.

Was she, he wondered suddenly, going to make love to him? He did not

stir, but he felt that in the end he would spring up and run out of the room, as if it were peopled with ghosts, mad ghosts repeating the acts of life in their unsubstantial forms of wraiths.

He did not know how long her caressing gesture persisted until it was interrupted by someone who blundered in the hall outside her room. The door opened—a man stood on the threshold looking in at them.

At once Duncan recognized this man, for it was the one whom he had observed the night before and that same afternoon; now Duncan could see his face.

He was scowling, grimacing. He wore a straggling moustache almost too unkempt to be real. His lips were drawn up into a snarl and he seemed to be without teeth save for two discoloured fangs projected downward like abortive tusks. He had a small head covered with thick, black hair. His face was wrinkled and tanned like a man who had lived all his life in the sun and rain.

The woman sprang up; the spell of unreality was broken.

"Warren!" she exclaimed.

"Now I've caught you two," he growled.

She stared at him, speechless.

"I came down here yesterday; found out from the ticket agent where you went. I saw you two together last night and followed this feller after he left you. Followed him again today. I got you now, both of you!"

Duncan arose. He expected to be attacked, and he found his position superlatively uncomfortable and absurd. All the sentimentalities that this woman had given him vanished at once. He saw her fumbling with her dress, her long fingers twisting the flowered fabric like skinny claws. She was frightful, monstrous, appalling! He wondered at his folly in being here in this room with her, his folly in talking to her, the folly of his first answering smile. He saw her husband come into the room.

The woman advanced to meet him, and her nervousness was gone.

"What did you come here for?" she



cried, fiercely. "Did I ask you to come here? Did I tell you I wanted you? I'm through with you, Warren, you go back to your pigs and cows. Why did you come here to insult my friends, follow them around through the streets like a fool? Go away from here; I don't want to talk to you!"

The husband did not answer, but stood staring at her, apparently subdued by her vehement abuse. Duncan realized that he was the spectator in a novel and significant drama; that the man was doubtless as surprised as himself, and less able to understand.

Indeed, an indubitable expression of stupefaction had come over his face, and he stared at his wife with dull eyes, as if she railed at him in a tongue incomprehensible to his ears. She began to scream out an incoherency of accusations, accusations against him, her life, her past. She screamed out her fabulous vague purpose, too, and the little room was filled with her vehement, shrill falsetto.

Suddenly Duncan walked toward the door. The man made no effort to detain him, but stood as before in the stupidity of his astonishment. Duncan passed out into the hall and the voice in the room diminished as he reached the stairs, became remote, meaningless, and unreal.

#### IV

DUNCAN decided to go back to the city the next day. In the morning he packed

up his things and then went out for a stroll along the Boardwalk, for he had chosen an afternoon train and there were several hours before the time of his departure.

There was a clean breeze blowing in from the sea, and out beyond the white-caps, almost on the edge of the horizon, a sailing yacht stood white in the sun, motionless it seemed, like something sculptured there. The crowds were laughing and a touch of their gaiety came to Duncan who felt almost content.

Then, coming down the Boardwalk, he saw the woman.

She was alone. He drew back under the awning of the nearest shop, for he did not wish her to see him. She was looking from right to left, ogling the men, grimacing like a comic mask. She wore a dress of some flowered material, and the wind blew it about upon her skinny figure as if it were hung on sticks.

Duncan drew in a surprised breath. Where was her husband? Was he somewhere behind her, hurrying to join her? Had she, in the end, given *him* a recrudescence of impossible hopes, a measure of her own madness?

Or had he returned, gone back without her, conquered by the vehemence of her uncomprehended desires? Duncan did not know. He would not go out and ask.

At least, she was there as before, walking in the crowd, grinning and smirking, tragic and ridiculous, a supreme unreality. . . .



## Der Tag

*By Stephen Hale*

THE great moment in Smith's life was on the day the census man came around and listed him as head of the family right before his wife and three grown daughters.





# A Panorama of Patriots

*By Major Owen Hatteras*

**P**ATRIOTS wearing little enameled American flags on their coat-lapels. Patriots who failed to fool the draft-boards, and now demand that they be indemnified in cash. Patriots who laboured in Washington at a dollar a year, asking no reward save a fair shot at the loot. Patriots who, at the first call for volunteers, leaped to the front as spell-binders in five-cent movie parlours. Patriots who had airship, rain-coat, pulse-warmer or U-boat-chaser contracts, and now talk of moving to Europe as soon as things settle down. Patriots who joined the Department of Justice as spy-chasers, and gave over their days and nights to pursuing East Side Socialists, German barbers and native slackers. Patriots who sent anonymous letters to the police, describing the suspicious doings of neighbours named Schultz, Kraus and Kümmelmeyer. Patriots who frequented Lüchow's and the Hofbraühaus, talking against the Kaiser in loud, challenging tones, at the same time glaring bravely at the waiters. Patriots who discovered wireless plants in the clubhouses of

the Metzger Liedertafel and Mozart Gesangverein. Patriots who enlisted in the Navy just before the second draft. Patriots who joined the Y. M. C. A., and devoted themselves to policing the public stews. Patriots who went to the front as vaudeville comedians, cheer-leaders, camp librarians, poets and press-agents. Patriots who were invited to lunch by Lord Northcliffe, Lord Reading and other English aristocrats. Patriots who engaged naturalized aliens in conversation, lured them into expressing the hope that Brother Ladislaus would get through the war safely and return to his family in Budapest, and then denounced them to the American Protective League. Patriots who collected money for the Belgians. Patriots who demanded that the name of Bismarck, S. D., be changed to Pershing or Josephus Daniels. Now and then a patriot who got into line at the first call for troops, served in a regiment of foot, saw service in actual battle, got out of his uniform as soon as he was discharged, and is now demanding nothing and complaining of nothing.



**W**HEN a woman throws her arms around her husband's neck and kisses him, it is a sign that she wants him either to forget something or to cough up something.





# Among the Nightingales

[A One-Act Play]

By Aldous Huxley

**I**T is night on the terrace outside the Hotel Cimarosa. Part of the garden façade of the hotel is seen at the back of stage—a bare white wall, with three French windows giving on to balconies about ten feet from the ground; and below them, leading from the terrace to the lounge, a double door of glass, open now, through which a yellow radiance streams out into the night. On the paved terrace stand two or three green iron tables and chairs. To the left a mass of dark foliage, ilex and cypress, in the shadow of which more tables and chairs are set. At the back to the left a strip of sky is visible between the corner of the hotel and the dark trees, blue and starry, for it is a marvellous June evening. Behind the trees the ground slopes steeply down and down to an old city in the valley below, of whose invisible presence you are made aware by the sound of many bells wafted up from a score of slender towers in a sweet and melancholy discord that seems to mourn the passing of each successive hour. When the curtain rises the terrace is almost deserted; the hotel dinner is not yet over. A single guest, COUNT ALBERTO TIRETTA, is discovered, sitting in a position of histrionic despair at one of the little green tables. A waiter stands respectfully sympathetic at his side. ALBERTO is a little man with large lustrous eyes and a black moustache, about twenty-five years of age. He has the pathetic charm of an Italian street-boy with an organ—almost as pretty and sentimental as Murillo's little beggars.

ALBERTO

(*Making a florid gesture with his right hand and with his left covering his eyes.*) Whereupon, Waiter (*he is reciting a tale of woes*), she slammed the door in my face.

(*He brings down his gesticulating right hand with a crash on to the table.*)

WAITER

In your face, Signore? Impossible!

ALBERTO

Impossible, but a fact. Some more brandy, please. I am a little weary.

(*The Waiter uncorks the bottle he has been holding under his arm and fills Alberto's glass.*)

WAITER

That will be one lira twenty-five, Signore.

ALBERTO

(*Throwing down a note.*) Keep the change.

WAITER

(*Bowing.*) Thank you, Signore. But if I were the Signore, I should beat her. (*He holds up the Cognac bottle and by way of illustration slaps its black polished flanks.*)

ALBERTO

Beat her? But I tell you I am in love with her.



WAITER

All the more reason then, Signore. It will be not only a stern disciplinary duty, but a pleasure as well; oh, I assure you, Signore, a pleasure.

ALBERTO

Enough, enough. You sully the melancholy beauty of my thoughts. My feelings at this moment are of an unheard-of delicacy and purity. Respect them, I beg you. Some more brandy, please.

WAITER

(*Pouring out the brandy.*) Delicacy, purity . . . Ah, believe me, Signore . . . That will be one lira twenty-five.

ALBERTO

(*Throwing down another note with the same superbly aristocratic gesture.*) Keep the change.

WAITER

Thank you, Signore. But as I was saying, Signore: delicacy, purity . . . You think I do not understand such sentiments. Alas, Signore, beneath the humblest shirt-front there beats a heart. And if the Signore's sentiments are too much for him, I have a niece. Eighteen years old, and what eyes, what form!

ALBERTO

Stop, Stop. Respect my feelings, Waiter, as well as the ears of the young lady (*he points toward the glass doors*). Remember she is an American.

(*The WAITER bows and goes into the hotel.*)

(*SIDNEY DOLPHIN and MISS AMY TOOMIS come out together on to the terrace. MISS AMY supports a well-shaped head on one of the most graceful necks that ever issued from Minneapolis. The eyes are dark, limpid, ingenuous; the mouth expresses sensibility. She is twenty-two and the heiress of those ill-gotten Toomis millions. SIDNEY DOLPHIN has a romantic, aristocratic appearance. The tailoring of 1830 would suit him. Balzac would have described his face as "plein de poésie." In effect he*

*does happen to be a poet. His two volumes of verse, "Zoetrope" and "Trembling Ears," have been recognized by intelligent critics as remarkable. How far they are poetry nobody, least of all DOLPHIN himself, is certain. They may be merely the ingenious products of a very cultured and elaborate brain. Mere curiosities; who knows? His age is twenty-seven.*

(*They sit down at one of the little iron tables. ALBERTO they do not see; the shadow of the trees conceals him. For his part, he is too much absorbed in savouring his own despair to pay any attention to the newcomers. There is a long, uncomfortable silence. DOLPHIN assumes the Thinker's mask—the bent brow, the frown, the finger to the forehead. AMY regards this romantic gargoyle with some astonishment. Pleased with her interest in him, DOLPHIN racks his brains to think of some way of exploiting this curiosity to his own advantage; but he is too shy to play any of the gambits which his ingenuity suggests. AMY makes a social effort and speaks, in (chanting Middle Western tones.)*

AMY

It's been a wonderful day, hasn't it?

DOLPHIN

(*Starting, as though roused from profoundest thought.*) Yes, yes, it has.

AMY

You don't often get it fine as this in England, I guess.

DOLPHIN

Not often.

AMY

Nor do we over at home.

DOLPHIN

So I should suppose.

(*Silence. A spasm of anguish crosses DOLPHIN's face; then he reassumes the old Thinker's mask. AMY looks at him for a little longer, then, unable to express her growing curiosity, she says with a sudden burst of childish confidence:*)



AMY

It must be wonderful to be able to think as hard as you do, Mr. Dolphin. Or are you sad about something?

DOLPHIN

(Looks up, smiles and blushes; a spell has been broken.) The finger at the temple, Miss Toomis, is not the barrel of a revolver.

AMY

That means you're not specially sad about anything. Just thinking.

DOLPHIN

Just thinking.

AMY

What about?

DOLPHIN

Oh, just life, you know, life and letters.

AMY

Letters? Do you mean love letters?

DOLPHIN

No, no. Letters in the sense of literature; letters as opposed to life.

AMY

(Disappointed.) Oh, literature. They used to teach us literature at school. But I could never understand Emerson. What do you think about literature for?

DOLPHIN

It interests me, you know. I read it; I even try to write it.

AMY

(Very much excited.) What, are you a writer, a poet, Mr. Dolphin?

DOLPHIN

Alas, it is only too true; I am.

AMY

But what do you write?

DOLPHIN

Verse and prose, Miss Toomis. Just verse and prose.

AMY

(With enthusiasm.) Isn't that interesting! I've never met a poet before, you know.

DOLPHIN

Fortunate being. Why, before I left England I attended a luncheon of the Poetry Union at which no less than a hundred and eighty-nine poets were present. The sight of them made me decide to go to Italy.

AMY

Will you show me your books?

DOLPHIN

Certainly not, Miss Toomis. That would ruin our friendship. I am insufferable in my writings. In them I give vent to all the horrible thoughts and impulses which I am too timid to express or put into practice in real life. Take me as you find me here, a decent specimen of a man, shy but able to talk intelligently when the layers of ice are broken, aimless, ineffective, but on the whole quite a good sort.

AMY

But I know that man already, Mr. Dolphin. I want to know the poet. Tell me what the poet is like.

DOLPHIN

He is older, Miss Toomis, than the rocks on which he sits. He is villainous. He is . . . but there, I really must stop. It was you who set me going, though. Did you do it on purpose?

AMY

Do what on purpose?

DOLPHIN

Make me talk about myself. If you want to get people to like you, you must always lead the conversation on to the subject of their characters. Nothing pleases them so much. They'll talk with enthusiasm for hours and go away saying you're the most charming, cleverest person they've ever met. But of course



you knew that already. You're Machiavellian.

AMY

Machiavellian? You're the first person that's ever said that. I always thought I was very simple and straightforward. People say about me that . . . Ah, now I'm talking about myself. That was unscrupulous of you. But you shouldn't have told me about the trick, if you wanted it to succeed.

DOLPHIN

Yes. It was silly of me. If I hadn't you'd have gone on talking about yourself and thought me the nicest man in the world.

AMY

I want to hear about your poetry. Are you writing any now?

DOLPHIN

I have composed the first line of a magnificent epic. But I can't get any further.

AMY

How does it go?

DOLPHIN

Like this (*he clears his throat*). "Casbeen has been, and Moghreb is no more." Ah, the transience of all sub-lunary things! But inspiration has stopped short there.

AMY

What exactly does it mean?

DOLPHIN

Ah, there you're asking too much, Miss Toomis. Waiter, some coffee for two.

WAITER

(*Who is standing in the door of the lounge.*) Si, Signore. Will the lady and gentleman take it here, or in the garden, perhaps?

DOLPHIN

A good suggestion. Why shouldn't

the lady and gentleman take it in the garden?

AMY

Why not?

DOLPHIN

By the fountain, then, Waiter. We can talk about ourselves there to the tune of falling waters.

AMY

And you shall recite your poetry, Mr. Dolphin. I just love poetry. Do you know Mrs. Wilcox's "Poems of Passion?"

(*They go to the left. A nightingale utters two or three phrases of song and from far down the bells of the city jangle three-quarters and die slowly away into the silence out of which they rose and came together.*)

(*LUCREZIA GRATTORAL has come out of the hotel just in time to overhear Miss Toomis's last remark, just in time to see her walk slowly away with a hand on SIDNEY DOLPHIN'S arm. LUCREZIA has a fine thoroughbred appearance, an aquiline nose, a finely curved sensual mouth, a superb white brow, a quivering nostril. She is the last of a family whose name is as illustrious in Venetian annals as that of Foscarini, Tiepolo or Tron. She stamps a preposterously high-heeled foot and tosses her head.*)

LUCREZIA

Passion! Passion, indeed! An American!

(*She starts to run after the retreating couple, when ALBERTO who has been sitting with his head between his hands, looks up and catches sight of the newcomer.*)

ALBERTO

Lucrezia!

LUCREZIA

(*Starts, for in the shade beneath the trees she had not seen him.*) Oh, you gave me such a fright, Alberto. I'm in a hurry now. Later on, if you . . .

ALBERTO

(*In a desperate voice that breaks into*



a sob). Lucrezia! You must come and talk to me. You must.

LUCREZIA

But I tell you I can't now, Alberto. Later on.

ALBERTO

(The tears streaming down his cheeks.) Now, now, now! You must come now. I am lost if you don't.

LUCREZIA

(Looking indecisively first at ALBERTO and then along the path down which AMY and SIDNEY DOLPHIN have disappeared.) But supposing I am lost if I do come?

ALBERTO

But you couldn't be as much lost as I am. Ah, you don't know what it is to suffer. *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt weiss wass ich leide.* Oh, Lucrezia . . .

(He sobs unrestrainedly.)

LUCREZIA

(Goes over to where ALBERTO is sitting. She pats his shoulder and his bowed head of black curly hair.) There, there, my little Bertino. Tell me what it is. You mustn't cry. There, there.

ALBERTO

(Drying his eyes and rubbing his head, like a cat, avid of caresses, against her hand.) How can I thank you enough, Lucrezia? You are like a mother to me.

LUCREZIA

I know. That's just what's so dangerous.

ALBERTO

(Lets his head fall upon her bosom.) I come to you for comfort, like a tired child, Lucrezia.

LUCREZIA

Poor darling!

(She strokes his hair, twines its thick black tendrils round her fingers. ALBERTO is abjectly pathetic.)

ALBERTO

(With closed eyes and a seraphic smile.) Ah, the suavity, the beauty of this maternal instinct!

LUCREZIA

(With a sudden access of energy and passion.) The disgustingness of it, you mean. (She pushes him from her. His head wobbles for a moment, as though it were inanimate, before he straightens into life.) The maternal instinct. Ugh! It's been the undoing of too many women. You men come with your sentimental babyishness and exploit it. Be a man, Bertino. Be a woman, I mean, if you can.

ALBERTO

(Looking up at her with eyes full of dog-like, dumb reproach.) Lucrezia! You, too? Is there nobody who cares for me? This is the unkindest cut of all. I may as well die.

(He relapses into tears.)

LUCREZIA

(Who has started to go, turns back, irresolute.) Now don't cry, Bertino. Can't you behave like a reasonable being?

(She makes as though to go again.)

ALBERTO

(Through his sobs.) You too, Lucrezia! Oh, I can't bear it, I can't bear it.

LUCREZIA

(Turning back desperately.) But what do you want me to do? Why should you expect me to hold your hand?

ALBERTO

I thought better of you, Lucrezia. Let me go. There is nothing left for me now but death.

(He rises to his feet, takes a step or two, and then collapses into another chair, unable to move.)

LUCREZIA

(Torn between anger and remorse.)



Now do behave yourself sensibly, Bertino. There, there . . . you mustn't cry. I'm sorry if I've hurt you. (*Looking towards the left along the path taken by AMY and DOLPHIN.*) Oh, damnation! (*She stamps her foot.*) Here, Bertino, do pull yourself together. (*She raises him up.*) There, now you must stop crying. (*But as soon as she lets go of him his head falls back on to the iron table with an unpleasant, meaty bump. That bump is too much for* LUCREZIA. (*She bends over him, strokes his head, even kisses the lustrous curls.*) Oh, forgive me, forgive me! I have been a beast. But tell me first, what's the matter, Bertino? What is it, my poor darling? Tell me.

ALBERTO

Nobody loves me.

LUCREZIA

But we're all devoted to you, Bertino *mio*.

ALBERTO

She isn't. Today she shut the door in my face.

LUCREZIA

She? You mean the Frenchwoman, the one you told me about? Louise, wasn't she?

ALBERTO

Yes, the one with the golden hair.

LUCREZIA

And the white legs. I remember: you saw her bathing.

ALBERTO

(*Lays his hand on his heart.*) Ah, don't remind me of it.

(*His face twitches convulsively.*)

LUCREZIA

And now she's gone and shut the door in your face.

ALBERTO

In my face, Lucrezia.

LUCREZIA

Poor darling!

ALBERTO

For me there is nothing now but the outer darkness.

LUCREZIA

Is the door shut forever, then?

ALBERTO

Definitively, forever.

LUCREZIA

But have you tried knocking? Perhaps, after all, it might be opened again, if only a crack.

ALBERTO

What, bruise my hands against the granite of her heart?

LUCREZIA

Don't be too poetical, Bertino *mio*. Why not try again in any case.

ALBERTO

You give me courage.

LUCREZIA

There's no harm in trying, you know.

ALBERTO

Courage to live, to conquer. (*He beats his breast.*) I am a man again, thanks to you, Lucrezia, my inspirer, my Muse, my Egeria. How can I be sufficiently grateful. (*He kisses her.*) I am the child of your spirit. (*He kisses her again.*)

LUCREZIA

Enough, enough. I am not ambitious to be a mother, yet awhile. Quickly now, Bertino, I know you will succeed.

ALBERTO

(*Cramming his hat down on his head and knocking with his walking-stick on the ground.*) Succeed or die, Lucrezia. (*He goes out with a loud and martial stamp.*)

LUCREZIA

(*To the waiter who is passing across the stage with a coffee-pot and cups on a tray.*) Have you seen the Signorina Toomis, Giuseppe?



WAITER

The Signorina is down in the garden. So is the Signore Dolphin. By the fountain, Signorina. This is the Signore's coffee.

LUCREZIA

Have you a mother, Giuseppe?

WAITER

Unfortunately, Signorina.

LUCREZIA

Unfortunately? Does she treat you badly, then?

WAITER

Like a dog, Signorina.

LUCREZIA

Ah, I should like to see your mother. I should like to ask her to give me some hints on how to bring up children.

WAITER

But surely, Signorina, you are not expecting, you—ah . . .

LUCREZIA

Only figuratively, Giuseppe. My children are spiritual children.

WAITER

Precisely, precisely. My mother, alas! is not a spiritual relation. Nor is my fiancée.

LUCREZIA

I didn't know you were engaged.

WAITER

To an angel of perdition. Believe me, Signorina, I go to my destruction in that woman—go with open eyes. There is no escape. She is what is called in the Holy Bible (*crosses himself*) a Fisher of Men.

LUCREZIA

You have remarkable connections, Giuseppe.

WAITER

I am honoured by your words, Signor-

ina. But the coffee becomes cold. (*He hurries out to the left.*)

LUCREZIA

In the garden! By the fountain! And there's the nightingale beginning to sing in earnest! Good heavens! what may not already have happened?

(*She runs out after the waiter.*)

(*Two persons emerge from the hotel, the VICOMTE PAUL DE BARBAZANGE and the BARONESS KOCH DE WORMS. PAUL DE BARBAZANGE is a young man—twenty-six perhaps—of exquisite grace. Five foot ten, well built, dark hair, sleek as marble, the most refined, aristocratic features, and a monocle. SIMONE DE WORMS is forty, a ripe Semitic beauty. Five years more and the bursting point of over-ripeness will have been reached. But now, thanks to massage, powerful corsets, skin foods and powder, she is still a beauty—a beauty of the type Italians admire, cushioned, steatopygous. PAUL, who has a faultless taste in bric-à-brac and women, and is by instinct and upbringing an ardent anti-Semite, finds her infinitely repulsive. The Baronne enters with a loud shrill giggle. She gives PAUL a slap with her green feather fan.*)

SIMONE

O you naughty boy! *Quelle histoire! Mon dieu!* How dare you tell me such a story.

PAUL

For you, Baronne, I would risk anything—even your displeasure.

SIMONE

Charming boy! But stories of that kind . . . And you look so innocent, too! Do you know many more like it?

PAUL

(*Suddenly grave.*) Not of that description. But I will tell you a story of another kind, a true story, a tragic story.

SIMONE

Did I ever tell you how I saw a wo-



man run over by a train? Cut to pieces, literally, to pieces. So disagreeable, I'll tell you later. But now, what about your story?

PAUL

Oh, it's nothing, nothing.

SIMONE

But you promised to tell it to me.

PAUL

It's only a commonplace anecdote. A young man, poor but noble, with a name and a position to keep up. A few youthful follies, a mountain of debts and no way out except the revolver. This is all dull and obvious enough. But now follows the interesting part of the story. He is about to take that way out, when he meets the woman of his dreams, the goddess, the angel, the ideal. He loves, and he must die without a word.

*(He turns his face away from the Baronne, as though his emotion were too much for him, which indeed it is.)*

SIMONE

Vicomte—Paul—this young man is you?

PAUL

*(Solemnly.)* He is.

SIMONE

And the woman!

PAUL

Oh, I can't, I mayn't tell you.

SIMONE

The woman! Tell me, Paul.

PAUL

*(Turning towards her and falling on his knees.)* The woman, Simone, is you. Ah, but I had no right to say it.

SIMONE

*(Quivering with emotion.)* My Paul! *(She clasps his head to her bosom. A grimace of disgust contorts Paul's classical features. He endures* SIMONE'S

*caresses with a stoical patience.)* But what is this about a revolver? That is only a joke, Paul, isn't it? Say it isn't true.

PAUL

Alas, Simone, too true. *(He taps his coat pocket.)* There it lies. Tomorrow I have a hundred and seventy thousand francs to pay, or be dishonoured. I cannot pay the sum. A Barbazange does not survive dishonour. My ancestors were crusaders, *preux chevaliers* to a man. Their code is mine. Dishonour for me is worse than death.

SIMONE

Mon dieu, Paul, how noble you are!

*(She lays her hands on his shoulders, leans back and surveys him at arm's length, a look of pride and anxious happiness on her face.)*

PAUL

*(Dropping his eyes modestly.)* Not at all. I was born noble, and noblesse oblige, as we say in our family. Farewell, Simone, I love you—and I must die. My last thought will be of you.

*(He kisses her hand, rises to his feet and makes as though to go.)*

SIMONE

*(Clutching him by the arm.)* No, Paul, no. You must not, shall not do anything rash. A hundred and seventy thousand francs, did you say? It is paltry. Is there no one who could lend or give you the money?

PAUL

Not a soul. Farewell, Simone.

SIMONE

Stay, Paul. I hardly dare to ask it of you—you with such lofty ideas of honour—but would you . . . from me?

PAUL

Take money from a woman? Ah, Simone, tempt me no more. I might do an ignoble act.

SIMONE

But from me, Paul, from me. I am



not in your eyes a woman like any other woman, am I?

PAUL

It is true that my ancestors, the crusaders, the *preux chevaliers*, might in all honour receive gifts from the ladies of their choice—chargers, swords, armour, or tenderer mementoes, such as gloves or garters. But money—no; who ever heard of their taking money?

SIMONE

But what would be the use of my giving you swords and horses? You could never use them. Consider, my knight, my noble Sir Paul, in these days the contests of chivalry have assumed a different form; the weapons and the armour have changed. Your sword must be of gold and paper; your breastplate of hard cash; your charger of gilt-edged securities. I offer you the shining panoply of the modern crusader. Will you accept it.

PAUL

You are eloquent, Simone. You could win over the devil himself with that angelic voice of yours. But it cannot be. Money is always money. The code is clear. I cannot accept your offer. Here is the way out. (*He takes an automatic pistol out of his pocket.*) Thank you, Simone, and good-bye. How wonderful is the love of a pure woman.

SIMONE

Paul, Paul, give that to me! (*She snatches the pistol from his hand.*) If anything were to happen to you, Paul, I should kill myself with this. You must live, you must consent to accept the money. You mustn't let your honour make a martyr of you.

PAUL

(*Brushing a tear from his eyes.*) No, I can't . . . Give me that pistol, I beg you.

SIMONE

For my sake, Paul.

PAUL

Oh, you make it impossible for me

to act as the voices of dead ancestors tell me I should . . . For your sake, then, Simone, I consent to live. For your sake I dare to accept the gift you offer.

SIMONE

(*Kissing his hand in an outburst of gratitude.*) Thank you, thank you, Paul. How happy I am!

PAUL

I, too, light of my life.

SIMONE

My month's allowance arrived to-day. I have the cheque here. (*She takes it out of her corsage.*) Two hundred thousand francs. It's signed already. You can get it cashed as soon as the banks open tomorrow.

PAUL

(*Moved by an outburst of genuine emotion kisses indiscriminately the cheque, the Baronne, his own hands.*) My angel, you have saved me. How can I thank you? How can I love you enough? Ah, *mon petit bouton de rose*.

SIMONE

Oh, naughty, naughty! Not now, my Paul; you must wait till some other time.

PAUL

I burn with impatience.

SIMONE

*Quelle fougue!* Listen, then. In an hour's time, Paul *chéri*, I shall be alone.

PAUL

An hour? It is an eternity.

SIMONE

(*Playfully.*) An hour. I won't relent. Till then, my Paul.

(*She blows a kiss and runs out; the scenery trembles at her passage.*)

(*PAUL looks at the cheque, then pulls out a large silk handkerchief and wipes his neck inside his collar.*)

(*DOLPHIN drifts in from the left. He is smoking a cigarette, but he does not seem to be enjoying it.*)



PAUL

Alone?

DOLPHIN

Alas!

PAUL

Brooding on the universe as usual? I envy you your philosophic detachment. Personally, I find that the world is very much too much with us; and the devil too; (*he looks at the cheque in his hand*) and above all the flesh. My god, the flesh . . .

(*He wipes his neck again.*)

DOLPHIN

My philosophic detachment? But it's only a mask to hide the ineffectual longings I have to achieve contact with the world.

PAUL

But surely nothing is easier. One just makes a movement and impinges on one's fellow beings.

DOLPHIN

Not with a temperament like mine. Imagine a shyness more powerful than curiosity or desire, a paralysis of all the faculties. You are a man of the world. You were born with a forehead of brass to affront every social emergency. Ah, if you knew what a torture it is to find yourself in the presence of some one—a woman, perhaps—some one in whom you take an interest that is not merely philosophic; to find oneself in the presence of such a person and to be incapable, yes, physically incapable, of saying a word to express your interest in her or your desire to possess her intimacy. Ah, I notice I have slipped into the feminine. Inevitable, for, of course, the person is always a she.

PAUL

Of course, of course. That goes without saying. But what's the trouble? Women are so simple to deal with.

DOLPHIN

I know. Perfectly simple if one's in

the right state of mind. I have found that out myself; for moments come—alas, how rarely!—when I am filled with a spirit of confidence, possessed by some angel or devil of power. Ah, then I feel myself to be superb. I carry all before me. In those brief moments the whole secret of the world is revealed to me. I perceive that the supreme quality in the human soul is effrontery. Genius in the man of action is simply the apotheosis of charlatanism, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Mr. Gladstone, Lloyd George what are they? Just ordinary human beings projected through the magic lantern of a prodigious effrontery and so magnified to a thousand times larger than life. Look at me. I am far more intelligent than any of these fabulous figures; my sensibility is more refined than theirs; I am morally superior to any of them. And yet, by my lack of charlatanism I am made less than nothing. My qualities are projected through the wrong end of a telescope and the world perceives me far smaller than I really am. But the world—who cares about the world? The only people who matter are the women.

PAUL

Very true, my dear Dolphin. The women . . .

(*He looks at the cheque and mops himself once more with his mauve silk handkerchief.*)

DOLPHIN

Tonight was one of my moments of triumph. I felt myself suddenly free of all my inhibitions.

PAUL

I hope you profited by the auspicious occasion.

DOLPHIN

I did. I was making headway. I had—but I don't know why I should bore you with my confidences. Curious that one should be dumb before intimates and open one's mind to an all but stranger. I must apologize.



PAUL

But I am all attention and sympathy, my dear Dolphin. And I take it a little hardly that you should regard me as a stranger.

(*He lays a hand on Dolphin's shoulder.*)

DOLPHIN

Thank you, Barbazange, thank you. Well, if you consent to be the receptacle of my woes, I shall go on pouring them out . . . Miss Toomis . . . But tell me frankly what you think of her.

PAUL

Well . . .

DOLPHIN

A little too ingenuous, a little silly even, eh?

PAUL

Now you say so, she certainly isn't very intellectually stimulating.

DOLPHIN

Precisely. But . . . oh, those china-blue eyes, that ingenuousness, that pathetic and enchanting silliness! She touches lost chords in one's heart. I love the Chromatic Fantasia of Bach, I am transported by Beethoven's hundred-and-eleventh Sonata; but the fact doesn't prevent my being moved to tears by the last luscious waltz played by the hotel orchestra. In the best-constructed brains there are always spongy surfaces that are sensitive to picture post-cards and Little Nelly and the End of a Perfect Day. Miss Toomis has found out my Achilles' heel. She is boring, ridiculous, absurd to a degree, but oh! how moving, how adorable.

PAUL

You're done for, my poor Dolphin, sunk—spurlous.

DOLPHIN

And I was getting on so well, was revelling in my new-found confidence and, knowing its transience was exploiting it for all I was worth. I had covered

an enormous amount of ground and then (*he claps his hands*), at a blow all my labour was undone. Actuated by what malice I don't know, la Lucrezia swoops down like a vulture, and without a by-your-leave or excuse of any kind carries off Miss Toomis from under my very eyes. What a woman! She terrifies me. I am always running away from her.

PAUL

Which means, I suppose, that she is always pursuing you.

DOLPHIN

She has ruined my evening and, it may be, all my chances of success. My precious hour of self-confidence will be wasted (though I hope you'll not take offence at the word)—wasted on you.

PAUL

It will return.

DOLPHIN

But when, but when? Till it does shall be impotent and in agony.

PAUL

I know the agony of waiting. I myself was engaged to a Rumanian Princess in 1916. But owing to the sad collapse in the Rumanian rate of exchange I have had to postpone our union indefinitely. It is painful, but it can be borne. (*He looks at the cheque and then at his watch.*) There are other things which are much worse. Believe me, Dolphin, it can be borne.

DOLPHIN

I suppose it can. For, when all is said, there are damned few of us who really take things much to heart. Julie de Lespinasses are happily not common. I am even subnormal. At twenty I believed myself passionate; one does at that age. But now, when I come to consider myself candidly, I find that I am really one of those who never deeply felt nor strongly willed. Everything is profoundly indifferent to me. I sometimes try to depress myself with the



thought that the world is a cesspool, that men are pathetic degenerates from the ape whose laboriously manufactured ideals are pure nonsense and find no rhyme in reality, that the whole of life is a bad joke which takes a long time coming to an end. But it really doesn't upset me. I don't care a curse. It's deplorable; one ought to care. The best people do care. Still, I must say I should like to get possession of Miss Toomis. Confound that Grattarol woman. What did she want to rush in like that for?

PAUL

I expect we shall find out now.

(PAUL jerks his head towards the left. LUCREZIA and AMY are seen entering from the garden. LUCREZIA holds her companion's arm and marches with a firm step towards the two men. AMY suffers herself to be dragged along.)

LUCREZIA

Vicomte, Miss Toomis wants you to tell her all about Correggio.

AMY

(Rather scared.) Oh, really—I—

LUCREZIA

And (sternly)—and Michel Angelo. She is so much interested in art.

AMY

But please—don't trouble . . .

PAUL

(Bowing gracefully.) I shall be delighted. And in return I hope Miss Toomis will tell me all about Longfellow.

AMY

(Brightening.) Oh, yes, don't you just love Evangeline?

PAUL

I do; and with your help, Miss Toomis, I hope I shall learn to love her better.

LUCREZIA

(To DOLPHIN, who has been looking from AMY to the Vicomte and back again at AMY with eyes that betray a

certain disquietude.) You really must come and look at the moon rising over the hills, Mr. Dolphin. One sees it best from the lower terrace. Shall we go?

DOLPHIN

(Starts and shrinks.) But it's rather cold, isn't it? I mean—I think I ought to go and write a letter.

LUCREZIA

Oh, you can do that tomorrow.

DOLPHIN

But really—

LUCREZIA

You've no idea how lovely the moon looks.

DOLPHIN

But I must—

LUCREZIA

(Lays her hand on his sleeve and tows him after her, crying as she goes.) The moon, the moon . . .

(PAUL and AMY regard their exit in silence.)

PAUL

He doesn't look as though he much wanted to go and see the moon.

AMY

Perhaps he guesses what's in store for him.

PAUL

(Surprised.) What, you don't mean to say you realised all the time?

AMY

Realised what?

PAUL

About la belle Lucrezia.

AMY

I don't know what you mean. All I know is that she means to give Mr. Dolphin a good talking to. He's so mercenary. It made me quite indignant



when she told me about him. Such a schemer too! You know, in America we have very definite ideas about honour.

PAUL

Here too, Miss Toomis.

AMY

Not Mr. Dolphin. Oh dear, it made me so sad; more sad than angry. I can never be grateful enough to Signorina Grattarol.

PAUL

But I'm still at a loss to know exactly what you're talking about.

AMY

And I am quite bewildered myself. Would you have believed it of him? I thought him such a nice man.

PAUL

But what has he done?

AMY

It's all for my money. Miss Grattarol told me. She knows. He was just asking me to marry him, and I believe I would have said Yes. But she came in just in the nick of time. It seems he only wanted to marry me because I'm so rich. He doesn't care for me at all. Miss Grattarol knows what he's like. It's awful, isn't it? Oh dear, I wouldn't have thought it of him.

PAUL

But you must forgive him, Miss Toomis. Money is a great temptation. Perhaps if you gave him another chance . . .

AMY

Impossible.

PAUL

Poor Dolphin! He's such a nice young fellow.

AMY

I thought so too. But he's false.

PAUL

Don't be too hard on him. Money probably means too much to him. It's the fault of his upbringing. No one who has not lived among the traditions of our ancient aristocracy can be expected to have that contempt, almost that hatred of wealth, which is the sign of true nobility. If he had been brought up, as I was, in an old machicolated castle on the Loire, surrounded by ancestral ghosts, imbued with the spirit of the crusaders and *preux chevaliers* who had inhabited the place in the past, if he had learnt to know what noblesse oblige really means, believe me, Miss Toomis, he could never have done such a thing.

AMY

I should just think he couldn't, Monsieur de Barbazange.

PAUL

You have no idea, Miss Toomis, how difficult it is for a man of truly noble feelings to get over the fact of your great wealth. When I heard that you were the possessor of a hundred million dollars . . .

AMY

Oh, I'm afraid it's more than that. It's two hundred million.

PAUL

. . . of two hundred million dollars, then . . . it only made it worse, I was very melancholy, Miss Toomis. For those two hundred million dollars were a barrier, which a descendant of crusaders and *preux chevaliers* could not overleap. Honour, Miss Toomis, honour forbade. Ah, if only that accursed money had not stood in the way . . . When I first saw you—oh, how I was moved by that vision of beauty and innocence—I wanted nothing better than to stand gazing on you forever. But then I heard about those millions. Dolphin was lucky to have felt no restraints. But enough, enough. (*He checks a rising tide of emotion.*) Give poor Dol-



phin another chance, Miss Toomis. At bottom he is a good fellow, and he may learn in time to esteem you for your own sake and to forget the dazzling millions.

AMY

Never. I can only marry a man who is entirely disinterested.

PAUL

But can't you see, no disinterested man could ever bring himself to ask you. How could he prove his disinterestedness? No one would believe the purity of his intentions.

AMY

(*Much moved.*) It is for me to judge. I know a disinterested man when I see him. Even in America we can understand honour.

PAUL

(*With a sob in his voice.*) Good-bye, Miss Toomis.

AMY

But no. I don't want it to be good-bye.

PAUL

It must be. Never shall it be said of a Barbazange that he hunted a woman for her money.

AMY

But what does it matter what the world says, if I say the opposite.

PAUL

You say the opposite? Thank you, thank you. But no, good-bye.

AMY

Stop. Oh! you're forcing me to do a most unwomanly thing. You're making me ask you to marry me. You're the only disinterested man I've ever met or, to judge from what I've seen of the world, I'm ever likely to meet. Haven't you kept away from me in spite of your feelings? Haven't you even tried to make me listen to another man—a man not worthy to black your boots? Oh,

it's so wonderful, so noble! It's like something in a picture play. Paul, I offer myself to you. Will you take me in spite of my millions?

PAUL

(*Falling on his knees and kissing the hem of AMY's skirt.*) My angel, you're right; what does it matter what the world says as long as you believe in me. Amy, amie, bien-aimée . . . Ah, it's too good! too, too good to be true!

(*He rises to his feet and embraces her with an unfeigned enthusiasm.*)

AMY

Paul, Paul . . . And so this is love. Isn't it wonderful . . . ?

PAUL

(*Looking round anxiously.*) You mustn't tell any one about our engagement, my Amy. They might say unpleasant things in the hotel, you know.

AMY

Of course I won't talk about it. We'll keep our happiness to ourselves, won't we?

PAUL

Entirely to ourselves; and tomorrow we'll go to Paris and arrange about being married.

AMY

Yes, yes; we'll take the eight o'clock train.

PAUL

Not the eight o'clock, my darling. I have to go to the bank tomorrow to do a little business. We must wait till the twelve-thirty.

AMY

Very well then. The twelve-thirty. Oh, how happy I am!

PAUL

So am I, my sweetheart. More than I can tell you.

(*The sound of a window being opened is heard. They look up and see the BARONESS dressed in a peignoir of the*



*tenderest blue, emerging on to the right hand of the three balconies.)*

AMY

Oh, my soul! I think I'd better go in. Good-night, my Paul.

*(She runs in.)*

SIMONE

Has that horrid little American girl gone? *(She peers down; then, reassured, she blows a kiss to PAUL.)* My Romeo!

PAUL

I come, Juliet.

SIMONE

There's a kiss for you.

PAUL

*(Throwing kisses with both hands.)* And there's one for you. And another, and another. Two hundred million kisses, my angel.

SIMONE

*(Giggling.)* What a lot!

PAUL

It is, you're quite right. Two hundred million . . . I come, my Juliet.

*(He darts into the hotel, pausing when just inside the door and out of sight of the BARONESS, to mop himself once again with his enormous handkerchief. The operation over, he advances with a resolute step. The BARONESS stands for a moment on the balcony. Then, seeing DOLPHIN and LUCREZIA coming in from the left, she retires, closing the window and drawing the curtains behind her. DOLPHIN comes striding in; LUCREZIA follows a little behind, looking anxiously up at him.)*

LUCREZIA

Please, please . . .

DOLPHIN

No, I won't listen to anything more. *(He walks with an agitated step up and down the stage. LUCREZIA stands with one hand resting on the back of a chair*

*and the other pressed on her heart.)* Do you mean to say you deliberately went and told her that I was only after her money? Oh, it's too bad, too bad. It's infamous. And I hadn't the faintest notion that she had any money. Besides, I don't want money; I have quite enough of my own. It's infamous, infamous!

LUCREZIA

I know it was a horrible thing to do. But I couldn't help it. How could I stand by and see you being carried off by that silly little creature?

DOLPHIN

But I cared for her.

LUCREZIA

But not as I cared for you. I've got red blood in my veins; she's got nothing but milk and water. You couldn't have been happy with her. I can give you love of a kind she could never dream of. What does she know of passion?

DOLPHIN

Nothing, I am thankful to say. I don't want passion, can't you understand that? I don't possess it myself and don't like it in others. I am a man of sentimental affections, with a touch of quiet sensuality. I don't want passion, I tell you. It's too violent; it frightens me. I couldn't possibly live with you. You'd utterly shatter my peace of mind in a day. Oh, how I wish you'd go away!

LUCREZIA

But Sidney, Sidney, can't you understand what it is to be madly in love with somebody? You can't be so cruel.

DOLPHIN

You didn't think much of my well-being when you interfered between Miss Toomis and me, did you? You've probably ruined my whole life, that's all. I really don't see why you should expect me to have any pity for you.

LUCREZIA

Very well then, I shall kill myself. *(She bursts into tears.)*



DOLPHIN

Oh, but I assure you, one doesn't kill oneself for things like that. (*He approaches her and pats her on the shoulder.*) Come, come, don't worry about it.

LUCREZIA

(*Throws her arms around his neck.*)  
Oh, Sidney, Sidney . . .

DOLPHIN

(*Freeing himself with surprising energy and promptitude from her embrace.*) No, no, none of that, I beg. Another moment and we shall be losing our heads. Personally I think I shall go to bed now. I should advise you to do the same, Miss Grattarol. You're overwrought. We might all be better for a small dose of bromide.

(*He goes in.*)

LUCREZIA

(*Looking up and stretching forth her hands.*) Sidney . . . !

(*DOLPHIN does not look round, and disappears through the glass door into the hotel. LUCREZIA covers her face with her hands and sits for a little, sobbing silently. The nightingale sings on. Midnight sounds with an infinite melancholy from all the twenty campaniles of the city in the valley. From far away comes the spasmodic throbbing of a guitar and the singing of an Italian voice, high-pitched, passionate, throaty. The seconds pass. LUCREZIA rises to her feet and walks slowly into the hotel. On the threshold she encounters the Vicomte coming out.*)

PAUL

You, Signorina Lucrezia? I've escaped for a breath of fresh, cool air. Mightn't we take a turn together? (*LUCREZIA shakes her head.*) Ah, well, then, good night. You'll be glad to hear that Miss Toomis knows all about Correggio now.

(*He inhales a deep breath of air. Then looking at his dinner-jacket he begins flicking at it with his handkerchief. A lamentable figure creeps in from the left. It is Alberto. If he had a tail, it*

*would be trailing on the ground between his legs.*)

PAUL

Hullo, Alberto. What is it? Been losing at cards?

ALBERTO

Worse than that.

PAUL

Creditors foreclosing?

ALBERTO

Much worse.

PAUL

Father ruined by imprudent speculations?

ALBERTO

No, no, no. It's nothing to do with money.

PAUL

Oh, well then. It can't be anything very serious. It's women, I suppose.

ALBERTO

My mistress refuses to see me. I have been beating on her door for hours in vain.

PAUL

I wish we all had your luck, Bertino. Mine opens her doors only too promptly. The difficulty is to get out again. Does yours use such an awful lot of this evil-smelling powder? I'm simply covered with it. Ugh?

(*He brushes his coat again.*)

ALBERTO

Can't you be serious, Paul?

PAUL

Of course I can . . . about a serious matter. But you can't expect me to pull a long face about your mistress, can you, now? Do look at things in their right proportions.

ALBERTO

It's no use talking to you. You're heartless, soulless.



PAUL

What you mean, my dear Alberto, is that I'm, relatively speaking, bodyless. I'm always *compos mentis*. You aren't that's all.

ALBERTO

Oh, you disgust me. I think I shall hang myself tonight.

PAUL

Do. It will give us something to talk about at lunch tomorrow.

ALBERTO

Monster!

(*He goes into the hotel.*) PAUL strolls out towards the garden, whistling an air from Mozart as he goes. The window on the left opens and LUCREZIA steps on to her balcony. Uncoiled, her red hair falls almost to her waist. Her dress is always half slipping off one shoulder or the other, like those loose-bodied Restoration gowns that reveal the tight-blown charms of Kneller's Beauties. She is a marvellously romantic figure, as she stands there, leaning on the balustrade, and with eyes more sombre than night, gazing into the darkness. The nightingales, the bells, the guitar and voice strike up. Great stars palpitate in the sky. The moon has swum imperceptibly to the height of heaven. In the garden below flowers are yielding their souls into the air, censers invisible. It is too much, too much . . . Large tears roll down LUCREZIA'S cheeks and fall with a splash to the ground. Suddenly, but with the noiselessness of a cat, ALBERTO appears, on the middle of the three balconies. He sees LUCREZIA, but she is much too deeply absorbed in thought to have noticed his coming. ALBERTO plants his elbows on the rail of the balcony, covers his face and begins to sob, at first inaudibly, then in a gradual quickening crescendo. At the seventh sob LUCREZIA starts and becomes aware of his presence.

LUCREZIA

Alberto! I didn't know . . . Have you been there long? (ALBERTO makes no

articulate reply, but his sobs keep on growing louder.) Alberto, are you unhappy? Answer me.

ALBERTO

(*With difficulty, after a pause.*) Yes.

LUCREZIA

Didn't she let you in?

ALBERTO

No.

(*His sobs become convulsive.*)

LUCREZIA

Poor boy!

ALBERTO

(*Lifting up a blubbered face to the moonlight.*) I am so unhappy.

LUCREZIA

You can't be more unhappy than I am.

ALBERTO

Oh, yes, I am. It's impossible to be unhappier than me.

LUCREZIA

But I *am* more unhappy.

ALBERTO

You're not. Oh, how can you be so cruel, Lucrezia?

(*He covers his face once more.*)

LUCREZIA

But I only said I was unhappy, Alberto.

ALBERTO

Yes, I know. That showed you weren't thinking of me. Nobody loves me. I shall hang myself tonight with the cord of my dressing-gown.

LUCREZIA

No, no, Alberto. You mustn't do anything rash.

ALBERTO

I shall. Your cruelty has been the last straw.



LUCREZIA

I'm sorry, Bertino *mio*. But if you only knew how miserable I was feeling. I didn't mean to be unsympathetic. Poor boy. I'm so sorry. There, don't cry, poor darling.

ALBERTO

Oh, I knew you wouldn't desert me, Lucrezia. You've always been a mother to me. (*He stretches out his hand and seizes hers, which has gone half-way to meet him; but the balconies are too far apart to allow him to kiss it. He makes an effort and fails. He is too short in the body.*) Will you let me come on to your balcony, Lucrezia? I want to tell you how grateful I am.

LUCREZIA

But you can do that from your own balcony.

ALBERTO

Please, please, Lucrezia. You mustn't be cruel to me again. I can't bear it.

LUCREZIA

Well, then . . . Just for a moment, but for no more.

(*BERTINO climbs from one balcony to the other. One is a little reminded of the trousered monkeys on the barrel organs. Arrived, he kneels down and kisses LUCREZIA'S hand.*)

ALBERTO

You've saved me. You've given me a fresh desire to live and a fresh faith in life. How can I thank you enough, Lucrezia, darling?

LUCREZIA

(*Patting his head.*) There, there. We are just two unhappy creatures. We must try and comfort one another.

ALBERTO

What a brute I am! I never thought of your unhappiness. I am so selfish. What is it, Lucrezia?

LUCREZIA

I can't tell you, Bertino; but it's very painful.

ALBERTO

Poor child, poor child. (*His kisses, which started at the hand, have mounted, by this time, some way up the arm, changing perceptibly in character as they rise. At the shoulder they have a warmth which could not have been inferred from the respectful salutes which barely touched the fingers.*) Poor darling. You've given me consolation. Now you must let me comfort your unhappiness.

LUCREZIA

(*With an effort.*) I think you ought to go back now, Bertino.

ALBERTO

In a minute, my darling. There, there, poor Lucrezia.

(*He puts an arm around her, kisses her hair and neck. LUCREZIA leans her bowed head against his chest. The sound of footsteps is heard. They both look up with scared, wide-open eyes.*)

LUCREZIA

We mustn't be seen here, Bertino. What would people think?

ALBERTO

I'll go back.

LUCREZIA

There's no time. You must come in. Quickly.

(*They slip through the French window, but not quickly enough to have escaped the notice of PAUL, returning from his midnight stroll. The Vicomte stands for a moment looking up at the empty balcony. He laughs softly to himself, and throwing his cigarette away, passes through the glass door into the house. All is now silent, save for the nightingales and the distant bells.*)

CURTAIN





# Addenda to "The Ideal Man"

*By Billie Shaw and B. T. Clayton*

1. When dining with a girl, he does not seek to explain his economical lack of appetite by remarking "I had a very late luncheon."

2. He is always honest in telling a woman when her nose needs powdering.

3. He does not expect a girl to dress for the theater at five minutes' notice, nor does he say "put on anything."

4. He can jilt a girl so cleverly that she will at once attempt a series of articles called "Men I Have Rejected."

5. He never presents a girl with a silver manicure set.

6. He does not call all Pullman porters "George."

7. He does not force his wife to maintain a wrinkle-producing smirk by paying her friendliest enemy compliments.

8. He never says "That is not the real *You*," when a girl says she likes jazz bands.

9. He does not join the crowd around a disabled automobile.

10. When a girl says she doesn't care much for candy, he does not say "Why should you? You're sweet enough."

11. He does not refer to his valet as "my man," nor to his apartment as "my rooms."

12. He scowls when he sews, wears no thimble and sews white buttons on with black thread. He uses a needle too large for the holes in the button.

13. In a restaurant (before prohibition) he never precluded possibilities for Paul Roget by remarking "Now you can have anything your little heart desires, but let me tell you that they *know* how to make a gin rickey here!"

14. He knows how to tell a married woman she is mismated without saying it.

15. He does not recommend a dentist by saying "See!" and displaying his bridgework.

16. When riding in an elevator he does not cry "fourth!" just as the operator has nearly reached the fifth.

17. He never calls any woman "girlie" or "little fellow," unless she is over forty-five. He never calls any woman "good old scout."

18. He doesn't say "I tell you, if we Americans hadn't stepped in at the psychological moment—" when his war activities consisted in saving peach pits and applauding President Wilson's picture.

19. He refrains from tenderly stroking a dollar and seventy-five cents marcelled coiffure.

20. He does not visit seaside photographers and send forth pictures of his grinning face on a tiny body astride a rocking-horse; nor his head poked through the head of a devil's outfit, the inscription reading "Having a helluva time."

21. After the fourth highball he does not say "I've a dear old mother out in Indiana, and she prays for her boy each night. Now let me see anybody insult a woman around *me*!"

22. He does not sit in the subway and flirt over his paper with the girl standing before him.

23. His love making is never "impetuous," and he doesn't say a word for at least two minutes after he has kissed a girl for the first time.

24. He pretends to believe a woman when she says she never heard "All Coons Look Alike to Me"; and he lets her get by with the remark, "I remember when I first saw Lillian Russell. Why,



I couldn't have been over four years old, and she wasn't so young then!"

25. He never passes the check boy, holding grimly to his hat and muttering something about "the principle of the thing."

26. He never responds to a woman's first advances.

27. He does not say of his wife, "We're bully good pals and all that, but it's been over five years since—well, it's just one of those arrangements, you know."

28. When at a bathing beach he never pulls a girl back from the water in mock terror, exclaiming, "Look out! you'll get your suit wet!"

29. He does not telephone a girl and ask her what she has on for that night, and upon being told "nothing" declare facetiously that he is "coming right up."

30. He never allows a barber to put tonic on his hair, has never been guilty of spats, breath perfumers, tie-clasps or carrying an umbrella.

31. His room is not decorated with the pictures of women whom he has loved and lost.

32. He does not wear the emblem of

his secret order on his coat lapel.

33. If he presents a female acquaintance with a book he does not mark certain amorous passages.

34. He never quotes Omar.

35. He does not have his monogram on his cigarettes.

36. When, in a restaurant, the waiter presents the bill he never compares the charges with the prices on the menu.

37. He has never been guilty of asking, "Miss Brown, may I not call you Alice?"

38. He does not give the impression that he is nursing the knifelike creases in his trousers.

39. He never confesses to a girl friend an indiscretion of his past.

40. He never taps the end of a cigarette upon his case.

41. He never ostentatiously gives a dollar bill to a blind beggar.

42. He never relates a history connected with the stone he has set in his tie pin.

43. He never claims an acquaintance with any famous personage.

44. When he has a cold in the head he does not attempt to keep an engagement.



## The Dance

*By David Morton*

WHEN we had gone from out the blazing room,  
 Into the cool and leafy dark, at last,  
 And found a sweetness in the scented gloom,  
 A holy quiet on the ways we passed,—  
 We turned, with only half-regretful glance  
 At silhouettes beyond that square of light,—  
 Content to leave the laughter and the dance,  
 For green, cool chambers of the Summer night.

I think that we shall not be otherwise,  
 When we have quit all rooms where once we went,—  
 But gazing back with grave, untroubled eyes,  
 Shall find ourselves so quietly content,  
 We shall not wish to alter that estate,  
 Nor seek again the dance we left of late.



# The Wraith

By *S. N. Behrman*

## I

**A**BOUT four he had given up working, thoroughly tired of what he was doing. He seemed to be marshalling an endless procession of words which had no meaning, no bearing on life. He looked at the last page . . . there was a certain factitious liveliness, a false coruscation. It might fool some people but it certainly did not fool him.

That's what came of writing things on order. Since the success of his first book he had written three; this was number five. How long would it last? Already he could not distinguish the last books from one another, from this. The real critics, the people who had "discovered" and made his first book sniffed at the later ones. The publishers did not care as long as they could clip encomiastic sentences from newspaper reviews with which to decorate the jackets of the novels he was spawning. There was always some anonymous lady reviewer who thought the latest book of any writer his greatest achievement . . .

A sudden feeling came over him that he could not continue this sort of thing. His brain was tired, his mind empty. It seemed to him that any one of the myriad people in the streets outside his window was engaged in worthier work than he. It all seemed utterly futile . . . And yet he would go on, he knew he would go on.

He rose wearily and flung himself into an arm-chair.

It was one of those moments when nothing could make life seem reasonable: when humanity seems like an end-

less file of people clambering aimlessly over a rocky road between gray, inscrutable cliffs. Grilling rose, went to the grand piano and began playing from an opened sheet of music on the rack. "La Lune Descend sur la Temple qui fut". . . . But his technique was imperfect—his fingers seemed all thumbs—and he gave it up in irritation.

He began to improvise—he had a certain pretty gift at improvisation—but the noises he made, not at all unpleasant, cloyed him.

He left the piano and sat moodily, cigarette in hand, staring at the floor. He wanted to go out but could think of nowhere to go. It had been his habit at about five o'clock to meet Olga for a cup of tea. At the thought of the number of hours he had spent with Olga, he winced. The whole affair was a jangling memory; what a fool he had been. . . . Certainly he would never let himself in for anything like that again. Yet he could not rid himself by this facile promise of the disturbing thought of Olga. What a mirthless joke everything was.

A picture of Olga rose before him, Olga with her innocent blue eyes look into his in that strange way she had. It had always seemed to him that there lingered in the back of her head some image of a monogamous, a-sexual Shelley—Olga the ethereal. And then she had gone off with Partridge of all men: Partridge, heavy, gross, a peasant grown rich, Partridge of the loutish manner and salivary speech. . . . Of course it was quite transparent, Olga's etherealism. It matched her blue eyes. . . .

The telephone rang. Grilling did not



move; he rarely answered the telephone. But it suddenly flashed through his mind that it might be Olga and he got up, curiously stirred. It showed him that he hadn't got rid of Olga yet: that she was at the back of his mind still, most of the time.

But it was not Olga. The voice was nevertheless familiar to him; it had an engaging, cool friendliness that set touch to an indefinable train of forgotten memories.

"Who is it?" he asked a bit sharply, his voice expressing unconsciously the irritation he sought to conceal from himself.

"You've forgotten me then?" the voice answered.

"Who is it?" he repeated.

"Phyllis Deane."

He could not believe it.

"Phyl . . . ! Not really . . . !

"Yes, really. . . . How are you?"

He asked her where she was, when he might see her. She was staying with some relatives in a part of town he had never heard of and could not meet him till eight o'clock. He made her promise to take dinner with him—she thought that was late for dinner—and they made an engagement at a downtown hotel.

He could scarcely let her go away from the telephone so happy was he to hear her voice.

"Talk to me," he pleaded, "don't go away—talk to me!"

"What shall I say? . . ."

"Anything. . . . The Lord's prayer. . . ."

"Same old laddie. . . ."

It was the tone she had always used to him, the tone of a mature person talking to a child. It delighted him. . . .

"I'm as old as you are now, Phyl. I've caught up with you and more. You can't come it on me with that tone any longer."

She laughed, her jolly, clear laugh.

"Wait till you see me," she warned. . . .

He walked back into the next room in a glow. Ennui had dropped from him: the sluggish rhythm of life had in-

definably quickened. Phyl Deane! He saw her again quite clearly, a splendid picture of her, her strong slender arms stroking a canoe across sun-stippled water, her hair unbound and haloed. . . . Because he was sixteen and she was nineteen she had considered him a child, permitted him unusual intimacies. . . .

He remembered one morning when he had come to her house and she had let him sit at her feet while she dried her hair in the sun. . . . The years fell away—he saw her sitting there as though it had just happened: remembered the little brown slippers she wore, the lavender dressing gown huddling her pulsating body, the very fragrance of the rich-gleaming hair cascading over her shoulders. . . . Phyl Deane! . . . She taught physical training to the school-children in the summer-term and he used to see her walking home at lunch-time followed by troops of the children. They adored her—everyone adored her.

In his happiness at hearing her voice again he forgot to ask about her husband. Mean little wretch. Had he died yet? Very likely. Why hadn't he stopped it—he could have stopped it. As he remembered how easily he could have stopped it, Grilling winced. It was not a pretty motive that had kept him silent. . . .

He looked at his watch. Five-thirty. More than two hours yet. He sat slumped in his arm-chair, in the gathering twilight, remembering. . . .

## II

It had made Grilling furious always because she treated him as though he were a child. It seemed to him dreadful that she should treat him that way when he felt himself so much older than the boys who were in her "crowd." His cousin Arthur, for instance, who wore a cream-coloured cap and was always making a lot of noisy jokes and who never read books. He was sixteen when he first met her and she was nineteen. The boys she went with were



twenty-five or older—to him they seemed quite old. He could not understand why she went with these stupid oldsters. They were so crude and harsh. He hated them all and was jealous of them.

She came from another town and because of her beauty the young fellows in the neighbourhood flocked about her. She had a brother about his age and soon after she moved into the town her brother took him to the house. He had never seen anyone like her: from the first sight of her he loved her. She came to him, her wonderful smile lighting her face and took his hand in her larger one—she was a big girl—and pressed it:

"So this is Arthur's cousin! . . ."

He could scarcely reply to her, he was so held by the beauty of her: the coiled brown-golden hair, the fresh round forearms, her steady blue eyes with their gold, long lashes. But later she broke through his silence and got him to talk—about books mainly: he was known as a "book-worm" almost from the time he was ten.

For four years, till she married, she occupied the center of his thoughts. She knew that he was devoted to her and it pleased her. Once she went away on a holiday. When he heard of her return he went to her house. She was not in when he came and he waited downstairs in the yard. At last she came; he saw her, smiling and chatting, walk down the street with little Martin Price, whom, of all her admirers, he hated most of all. She stopped with Price, shook hands, smiled gaily at him and came across the street alone.

When she reached the corner of the house, where he was standing, pressed against the wall, she saw him. The look in his eyes was so strange, there was such a mingling of pain and gladness in them that she bent her face to his and kissed him. It was the first time a girl had done that to him; it blinded him so that he could scarcely follow her up the stairs. But she turned and called to him and asked him numberless questions about what he had

been doing while she was away. He had read a good many books. . . .

With that kiss he crossed the threshold of adolescence; henceforth he looked at her with conscious desire. Up to then she had been to him an idealized figure, fleshless, like the heroines of his books. But he concealed his desire like one ashamed, hugged it close in his secret thoughts, because he knew that to her he was no more than a child, to be fondled. Also, and above all, he dreaded lest she should discover his secret and despise him. It stunned him—and it was not till much later when he discovered that she moved in a plane where such thoughts and desires were not strangers. It was the summer that his mother died and he first heard of her engagement to Martin Price.

After his mother's death he moved to his cousin Arthur's house to live. He slept in a little room adjoining Arthur's den and he could often hear the talk that passed between Arthur and his cronies as he lay awake at night. Martin Price was Arthur's particular friend and it was late one night when Martin had come in to confide in Arthur that he learned the truth about Price.

Of all the boys Phyllis Deane "went with," he hated Martin the worst. He was a little, red-headed, officious chap, very loud and self-complacent, because his father was a rich lawyer who had an assured position in the town. There was an unhealthy pallor on his freckled face, the cause of which was made known to the boy that night. After that he lay awake many nights listening to Price while he detailed his symptoms and the progress of his disease to Arthur. So that when it was rumoured about that Phyllis was going to marry Price the boy did not believe it. The thing was impossible, it was slander. Phyllis couldn't possibly marry this coarse, little man, Phyllis the splendid, free as air and brave as the wind. It was incredible. Besides there was Price's illness: the boy had gone to the library and read everything he could find about it in the medical dictionaries: as far as he could determine the illness



was certain to be fatal to those who contracted it while under thirty.

Phyllis had been unusually kind to him that summer; since his mother's death. Also he was by now something of a celebrity in the town: he had won a scholarship to go abroad after his graduation from the local college. He was nineteen now and felt himself quite a man: from the intellectual eminence of his collegiate wisdom he looked down upon Phyllis's older friends; he was a good deal of a prig.

But before Phyllis he was humble, penitent, because of the sin he felt he had now for so long been committing against her—for he still desired her and dreamed of her when he was alone.

. . . They were both splendid swimmers and they would take a canoe and spend long happy hours together paddling and swimming. . . . He would read poetry to her aloud and they would talk plays and books. But latterly she had seemed distracted, absorbed, wistful. He would look closely at her when she was this way, staring at her, trying to fathom her secret: she would catch him and say:

"You funny boy! Why do you look at me like that?"

And he would turn his eyes away, flushing, wondering if it could be true that she was to marry Price.

One night, when he knew she was out with Price, he could not sleep. The pain he felt at the thought of them together was too much for him and he crept out of bed when it was nearly midnight, dressed, and in the dark shadows of some trees near her house, he waited. He did not know why, but he waited.

It was nearly an hour before he saw them: they were walking along very close together. Price was shorter than she and his arm was clenched through hers as though fastening her against her will. When they reached the gate they paused and Price took her in his arms and his lips met hers in a long kiss. . . .

It was very painful to the boy; he stopped a moment watching but finally

edged away and when he was far enough away he almost ran. Most of the night he spent in walking, very swiftly, as though driven—she allowed Price near her, she allowed him to touch her, to kiss her. He saw her, standing before Price, a willing victim. He felt the sickening pallor of Price's face and the memory of it sickened and overpowered him. . . .

He went away soon after that and did not see her again for a year, till after his return from Europe. She had been married for six months and Price was already mortally stricken with his illness. When Grilling entered the room where Price sat he was conscious that the little man was staring at him malevolently out of his sunken eyes, hating him because he was strong and able to ride about in trains and eat what he liked.

Later his cousin Arthur had told him that as his illness progressed Price became increasingly meticulous about food: eating became a devastating lust, which he could not control though he knew he could only prolong his life by simplifying his diet.

Grilling scarcely spoke to Phyllis that day: she was pale and worn but still beautiful. It was the last time he had heard from her until that afternoon on the telephone, an interval of seven years. . . .

### III

It had become quite dark in the room. He rose with a little start and looked at the phosphorescent dial on his wrist. It was seven o'clock, just time to dress and make his engagement with Phyllis. His mind was suffused with memories of her: not Phyllis as he had last seen her, pale and silent, but the golden creature of sun and water, with whom he had spent the happiest days of his life. He remembered her in the boy's swimming suit she used to wear, her full, yet somehow, boyish figure, as she cleaved through the water with long, powerful strokes.

"Dear old Phyl," he whispered to



himself. "What a lark to see her again!"

He had not heard from Arthur or the others in years but he was sure that Price must be dead. And he thought of the jolly times he would have with Phyllis: she would enjoy meeting the literary and artistic people he knew, they would go to the theaters and the restaurants, they would motor out to the beaches and go swimming again! His mind was full of delightful plans for them both. And how wonderfully lucky that she should come now—when Olga—it was providential!

They would have great times! Perhaps—who could tell?—he was ready for any adventure now, even the adventure of marriage. . . . Why not?

He rode downtown in a happier frame of mind than he had been in for months, filled with an extraordinary expectancy, like a boy on a holiday. He was not unconscious—and it added considerably to the pleasure of the moment—that to Phyl he was a good deal of a personage. "I always knew," she had said over the telephone, "that you would be someone very wonderful some day."

He felt quite young again. Time had rolled back and he was not yet twenty and he was lying in the hot sun by a lake looking at the tiny waves that ran up like little crystal kittens to lick the shore. He was waiting for Phyl to emerge from the wooden bath-houses in her white middie, her unbound hair a gleaming mist, her sunned arms shading her eyes, deep blue, like the water in the shadow of the far island.

She was wearing mourning . . . so that it was a moment before he recognized her down the crowded corridor. Something else, too, about her, was changed; he did not know what but it kept him unsure whether or not it was she until he was quite close to her and looked into his eyes. She was smiling at him . . . all his senses kept telling him to act not surprised, not disappointed, as though she were as she had always been.

But in this he was unsuccessful for she said with a slow smile:

"I've changed, haven't I?"

"You're stunning, Phyl."

"Dear boy, Dickie."

They moved out of the crowded lobby into a quiet room. He was conscious that she was nervous, fluttered, troubled about how she was looking, what he was thinking. . . . It hurt him immeasurably; more than the change in her physical appearance; more than the sallowness of her face or the somehow faded eyes and altered figure, this nervousness of hers smote him to the heart. . . . Was this what life did to people?

This was what that little dead man had done to her then; the little man who was dying when he married her, who wanted her to walk with him to the edge of the grave because he feared to go alone.

They talked about one thing or another but each knew that the life had gone out of their friendship. So, like dead people, they talked about the past . . . about how various people neither of them cared about were faring. . . .

He could not bear to sit and listen to her: he jumped up and said with factitious eagerness:

"We must find some place to dine—not here—too stiff—some lively place."

\* \* \*

It had begun to rain; the drops of water flattened themselves against the taxi windows like battalions of tiny spears. Phyllis was talking about the frightful failure of her married life: how Price had lingered on and on, how she had had to wait on him, how imperious he had been about his meals, how terrible it had been. . . . Why had no one warned her, why had no one told her? Surely some of Martin's friends must have known. . . .

But he was scarcely listening to the querulous voice. Through the dim curtain of the rain he was seeing another person—a girl, with bare arms and haloed hair, stroking a canoe across sun-stippled water. . . .



# Angelie

*By Farquhar Sloan*

ANGELIE sells charcoal in a little shop on the Rue du Dragon, on the right-hand side as you go to the market. You can see her there, sitting before her door any day in the year. She is always smiling.

Angelie is the soul of good-nature, and this is probably because she is fat. She is larger than we are, by a very comfortable margin, for she weighs over three hundred pounds. Her ankles are about as large as your hip, or a trifle larger; her hips are very extensive. She has breasts enough for the Sultan's harem, and when she moves they shake like jelly. Her face is very red and very beaming. Her nose is pug. Her eyes twinkle. Her hair, which is dark, she does up in curl-papers in a rosette over either ear. She is very much stronger than you are, for she can carry a lump of coal on her shoulder as big as a barrel and notice it hardly at all.

Her shop is about as large as a clothes-closet. She sells charcoal and candy, and she sells wood, neatly cut into sticks. It is piled in one corner, diagonally across from the parrot. Bananas hang in front.

Angelie is the soul of good-nature. To know her is to love her. She is the kindest Irishwoman in the world. (But she swears better than Queen Elizabeth, and it would never do to begin a quarrel with her, as all the Rue du Dragon has learned). She is the soul of good-nature and the image of a troll. She weighs three hundred pounds and is very extensive.

Jacques weighs a hundred and five. You do not discover him at first. He appears spasmodically. He is about as tall as Angelie's elbow. When he sits

on a small chair his feet dangle. His skin is dark and his hair and his brows and his mustache, which is very comical and bristly, are black; his eyes, too, are as black as ink. He is the smallest man in the world, without exception. His face is very vivacious, though without intelligence, and good-humouredly devilish. Angelie adores him. It would be ridiculous to assume that they are married. He is her friend. They live in a small room behind the shop.

They are a very happy couple. Now and then, of course, there are domestic difficulties. But these are quickly settled, for Angelie weighs three hundred pounds and is as strong as a horse. She is generally seen—these performances are always in public in front of the shop on the Rue du Dragon—to seize Jacques by the seat of his trousers and whirl him in mid-air like a pin-wheel. When she does this she swears better than Queen Elizabeth. But in a moment or two Jacques is a physical wreck and Angelie abandons him to continue about her business. It is an hour later, as a general and invariable rule, that he surprises her, when she has forgotten the matter, by knocking her senseless with a stick of her wood which is piled neatly in the corner to be sold at eight sticks for a nickel. As is natural, when she awakes with a blackened eye, she loves him better than ever.

The day following such a domestic upheaval they will be sitting—as they were sitting yesterday—in front of the shop for all the Rue du Dragon to see, Angelie upon a chair, with her head in a bandage, adoring; Jacques upon the doorstep, unscathed, talkative, proud as Punch.



# Tante Manhattan

[An Essay]

By Stephen Ta Van

## I

I AM of those homeless ones toward whom the City stands in place of parent; but the feeling is neither maternal on the one side nor filial on the other. Rather are we indifferent guardian and sardonic ward. How should she, who knows, and has learned both to despise and make use of the tricks, weaknesses and wisdom of so many shrewd, assertive men, concern herself specially with a clown like me?

Receptive, she is often aloof. Her attitude resembles that of the women parading on her Avenue in initialed motors, decorated Dianas of the Three Worlds—High, Half and Middle—of whom my friend the old cigar salesman says that they “seek always der evil in men, und allow der good to lang-vish.” Like them, she is both avid and scornful of money; passionate, and cold. She is the great courtesan, narrow-foreheaded, thin-hipped. Though her power is scarcely at the zenith, her beauty is slightly past its prime, except for him whose sophistication finds beauty in the first symptoms of decay. In her vivacity there is beginning to be fever, and in her repose, lassitude. Her colours, deeply brilliant or languorously pale, suggest the Oriental.

“Come or stay, you who are eager,” she says. “I promise everything and may give that or nothing.”

Yet despite her poise, her Eastern languor, knowledge, and affectations, an amusing Americanism persists. She possesses, deep down, a remnant of the

Provincial, a simplicity which evokes at the same time admiration and the affection that one gives to a child. Essentially, because of her femininity and that lingering remnant of naïve aspiration, she is still human and lovable, and before a sense of humour her pose of a vampire occasionally wavers. Rarely, the painted Babylonian features soften into a pleasant, if vulgar, Dutch smile. Ah, after all—*quelle bonne Tante Manhattan!*

Alone, and lonely, I strongly doubt whether she has heart or soul. Not even the steel-blue and orange lights above Times Square can warm me then. But there are other moods, less skeptical: as when, walking with Lovely-Eyes along upper Broadway of a June evening, I look up from the crowd moving through the mauve electric glow, to the white radiance above the bulk of the Belnord—dark, save for one medieval slit of light—and see the witch-moon shining magically down, as it has on all barbaric capitals; or when the little Queen of Egypt, glancing down a street-canyon toward the West, stops me to watch the splendour of a gray-and-crimson sunset across the Hudson.

If you cannot follow the connection from the sight of sunset or moonrise in the company of a wise and lovely lady, to a belief in Tante Manhattan's possession of soul and heart, then we do not speak the same language, you and I, and I cannot serve you further.

Now you have not only Ta Van's description of Tante Manhattan, but



also a key to himself; for as a man sees, so he is. His vision is a filter, instinctively admitting only things suited to his temperament. As he grows older it clogs with silt or waxes sharper and more effective, according to his retrogression or development; but it changes only in degree, never in kind. Nothing could be falser than a belief that any of us loses the essential character with which he was born. When events seem to prove a radical change in character, it is because the original estimate was false, or obscured by admiration of ability.

So it has been with the geniuses among whom I first came down, a gay dog from that dear college, to the precincts of Tante Manhattan during the consulship of McClellan, twenty years ago. How have the Mighty fallen, and the Erstwhile Insignificant, how safely some of them have scaled the heights! J. Whiteley, who was our butt in freshman year at the High Street eating-joint, is now a financial margrave; while last Tuesday evening the Grand Llama of the Sierras, oracular refuge and arbiter of all our early troubles—owner, appropriately, of the veritable voice of a mountain—was seen by me to descend, maundering feebly and escorted by fat Village frigates, from a third-rate chop suey house.

The contrasts are striking: yet the Llama, loving conversation better than deeds, had always the germ of weakness, and little Whiteley was no less the industrious ant when we were mocking him than he is today. At Ware, Whiteley had his peons, lower than he, whom he peddled out as theatrical supers or active pallbearers, and ruled through greed and fear as he now rules his drilled myrmidons in Cedar street; just as now the Llama, even in his degradation, has around him females, slaves to that astounding voice, though he is far too soiled for the attention of the fair ladies who once loved him. The characters of the two men have not changed.

I loathe the ditch in which the Llama welters. That special phase of Village life—*sans* hope, soap and discrimina-

tion; *sans* almost everything, in fact, save dirt and discussion of unimportant Harris anent dreary bygone Wilde—offends my nostrils. I cannot thole the blowsy, pseudo-intellectual trollops or their greasy pseudo-males. I feel shame for the Llama himself because, lacking in his sodden state a *claque* suited to his mentality, he permits applause from an audience of zanies. But even so, stubbornly I maintain that he may be as interesting, as much worth while, as a J. Whiteley, if only in retrospect. In his stale cups (*Eheu, fugaces, Posthume, Posthume*) he is still the phantom of mine old schoolfellow, than whom no man ever played a better combination of Melancholy Dane and Second Gravedigger, to my First Gravedigger and Horatio.

It may be better, so I think, to have been humorous in other days, than never to have been humorous at all. You cannot get humor from a J. Whiteley, whose Hamlet, if attempted, would be but a thing of windy suspiration and forced breath. If it be argued against me that Hamleting by wholesale is unnecessary, I shall ask: What, then, is necessary? To an extent I am with the poet, Robert Frost, who in his (reported) observations on Success said that he demanded it only of those who directed colleges or ran railroads.

Nevertheless there is food for thought in contemplation of the careers of us who came down at that time through Tante Manhattan's gateway, filled with the blind and glorious confidence of youth. We were all to be conquerors, in the Law, in Medicine, in Art, Literature or Business.

Eddie Howes and I, for example, were to achieve wealth through the connivance of a prominent Ware alumnus, a manufacturer, who obtained new blood by recruiting among fledgling graduates with much talk of Opportunity and a show, doubtless sincere enough, of college spirit. Into the factory, close to the river, the recruits were inducted at the bottom; and they were expected to emerge through the



office at the top, after an intensive course of training, as executives.

Eddie emerged in due form, and his success may be deemed analogous, I suppose, to that of a Frost railroader. It is a cause for pride; but I shudder in visualizing, by a wild imaginative burst, an executive Ta Van evolved by the same process. Of course there was no actual danger. None save the raw fool that I was, and the well-meaning friends who were my advisers, could have dreamed that I would follow such a line long, or that it could accept me. I was the Ta Van of today, minus development and experience, as surely as were the Llama and the Paul Wrightstone of those days the logical forerunners of their present selves.

## II

As with us, so with Tante Manhattan. The tenor of the merriment in her halls was the same, though its form was cruder, and the halls themselves were more garish. Those were the evenings of the Haymarket and the Tivoli, and the halcyon nights, or rather, early morns, of Jack's.

If I were writing letterpress for the usual series of etchings of Picturesque New York, I would importune the etcher to omit an impression of Old Trinity, if necessary, in order to find room to seize the interest of more—and possibly more prominent—veterans with a recollection of the Haymarket. It lured the wayfarer by ribald music at the southeast corner of Thirty-first Street and Sixth avenue, and often ejected him forcibly, later, by the hand and foot of Big Bill the Bouncer.

Bill was advertised by visiting college freshmen as the strongest man on earth, but in fact his pre-eminence was as vulnerable as that of Bull O'Donnell, who used to take position, with stick and bulldog, in mid-floor of Miller's dance hall at Savin Rock, and defy the world to put him off. Dave Cannon, of Denver, broke the stick and O'Donnell's nose, and threw the bulldog into Long Island Sound; and in like manner Big

Bill of the Haymarket met disaster, by making too broad a challenge. But I never heard that anyone defeated the Flying Wedge at Jack's, and I personally proved the possibility of moving, with its brief assistance, from Jack's doorway to the space between the car-tracks under the Sixth Avenue El., without touching the intervening sidewalk.

Many remember the Haymarket, not so many the Chimney Corner, that subterranean den of mirth a little farther down Sixth Avenue. There, while the fight started to a chorus of eldritch female shrieks, the experienced guest had his choice of two courses: he might drop to the floor when the lights went out, and by following the wainscoat, below the zone of flying beer-bottles, find his way to the staircase mounting to the street; or, smashing the front of his schooner against the table-edge, he might sail into the fray with the heavy glass base and jagged edge for a weapon.

The old abodes of merriment have been demolished. Where are the gals, the tall supple gold-diggers of that time, who sallied forth of an evening clad in black and preceded by their brilliant pompadours? Where are Blanche, second cousin to a lieutenant-general, and Dolly-May of the poetic calves, whom Wrightstone, the poet, used to entertain at tea in Burling Slip? Rhea, Mord and Guiomar—of noble Spanish blood, the last, when not too far in liquor—where are they now?

Their names, recalling memories of tales hissed excitedly across a tablecloth, quips in the Elder Slang, and high metallic laughter from white throats in the streets at dawn, flow past me like a quaint ballade. I shall remember them if ever I grow old, not sentimentally, nor yet (God save us!) obsessed with the delusion, meet for the dying rake turned moralist, that all of them ended tragically as charwomen for their sins; but pleasantly, I trust, and gaily, as one still in love, without too much dependence upon melodrama, with this life on which, indifferent to



gloom-gatherers and honey-squids alike, the sun and moon continue to shine blandly down.

Our brotherhood was always short, individually and collectively, of money for board and room, but seemed able at all times to scrape up the means of social entertainment. Results of this system varied, some of us reverting to a natural canniness, others degenerating into sloth. I was the only one to whom the irregular life—minus certain of its more vulgar phases—was permanently suited. Its shifts and artificial hazards stimulated me, and I have never discarded the habit of making, in non-essential matters, quick changes shocking to the normal American mind.

Thus a ship and a dark-eyed lady tempted me away from Tante Manhattan—lures that have always been hard to resist. It was my first visit to Paris, where I might be living now if I had not finally preferred New York. I visited also the Rhine Valley, and disliked land and people only a little less than I do today.

With regard to anything Teutonic, except sausages, I am hopelessly intransigent. The hatred may have been born with me, for as a boy I resented the German language and the thoughts appropriately transmitted thereby. When McCallum, of the Philosophy Department at Ware, jerked his wrinkled thumb first over his right shoulder and then over his left, pointing at the pictures on the classroom wall of "Kant the Lonely Thinker," and "Liebnitz the Great Philosopher," my mind registered reservations, and sought Voltaire and Montaigne for refuge.

I spent three years in wandering, often on shipboard, and eight others fantastically as a married man. When after long intervals I passed through New York, I found the boys swallowed by the Village or coerced by masterful females. Wrightstone, the poet, met his fate in Ernestine, that savage giantess who with one hand lays out his flannels and holds a pistol to his forehead with the other. The Llama married a

she-physician, became notorious as her husband, and began to compose his plaint, which he has been singing ever since, of a bright life ruined by a woman's itch for fame. Lesser lights slept six in a row on cots in Washington Square, in a heavy atmosphere dominated by Buck Dinant's snoring—I never heard its equal, even in the Army—or sought the roof with the cats on stifling summer nights, dragging the guest behind them. It was an eerie spectacle to see across one's up-pointing toes, as one awakened in the dawn, the procession of gaunt felines gliding over cornices from roof to roof in the gray light.

Only Colin McQuair, our literary genius, seemed to stay utterly in *statu quo*. He had begun as an author, and an author he remained. He has published several short stories, and is a prolific writer of quaint poems commemorative of his friends' birthdays and those of their offspring. I think he wears the same greatcoat, a little greenish at the seams, that he wore in 1903.

I followed a woman from Tante Manhattan's threshold, and in the train of one, returned. It was after the passing of little Helen, the super-sheepface, and a theatrical experience (oh, that company!) and a year and a half of the War, that I met Fleurette the Fair in Baltimore, a city that has for me no personality, now that a certain chef is dead. My first sight of her was as she entered one of their medium-sized hotels in a Hickson gown, and to the end of our association I never wearied of watching her go through a lobby. She grew a cubit at the door, and moved as if the rows of eyes that riveted their gaze on her were no higher than the level of her shoulders. I used to hang back to see the comedy—it was the Princess Flavia and a mob of oily, crook-kneed lacqueys, desiring what they did not dare approach. In some ways Fleurette was by no means so patrician, but to the end of our friendship she maintained at least a trace of the fastidiousness that saves her mem-



ory. Though compelled to withhold the ultimate tribute of trust, I loved her enough to go to work for her sake, when less prosaic sources of income failed.

So many jobs! The magazine for females, best of its kind save five or six; the Jewish advertising house; the trio of trade papers, whose proprietor would have paid a fancy salary if he had been in a position to pay any; the business service, very modern; the insurance horror—always the same; the artistic monthly, managed by a maniac; to all of these and others, as educational influences, I remain genuinely grateful. To their Victoriano Huertas and departmental Simon Legrees, I wave a friendly hand, as one bandit to his fellows. They got as much from me as I from them.

But aside from necessity, I was as usual unable to take seriously what has always seemed to my personal viewpoint a game, of a mental demand equal in calibre to that of draw poker, but not so steadily engrossing. I am constitutionally committed to a belief that for me, a heron flying down the wind, a woman's smile, or an organ-grinder dropping from heat-exhaustion on the sidewalk, may be as important as, for example, the most effective way to advertise a deodorant. When fate freed me from the obligation of furnishing Fleurette's support, I naturally followed the interest or opportunity of the moment, and arrived sometimes in strange business alleyways.

Thus I became for a time a member of the Addressers' Club, which meets in a publisher's loft to address envelopes for circular mailing, at a stipend of a little more than two dollars per thousand of envelopes addressed. The trade is a recognized one, there are fluctuations of demand and supply, and it is a refuge for derelicts and cripples. The first addresser whom I faced across one of the long tables quoted at me Marcus Aurelius—*animula blandula quo nunc abibis?*—and a second at the same table was a college student in search of local color and a little pin-money during vacation; but Numbers

Three and Four were silvery-haired, sly old men in stained clothing, one flabbily fat, the other thin as weak gruel, and both rancid with the shameful timidity of weakness, flouted age, and failure. They squabbled like defective children over their supplies of ink and envelopes, and watching them I was shaken by an imaginative horror, lest life should take revenge on me for all my flittings by bringing me at last, in seriousness, to their broken situation.

But such fears are momentary; one comes to believe that life, especially in Tante Manhattan's dominion, is not revengeful but indifferent. A second glance at the old addressers reacted on the sense of humour, and I was on as pleasant terms with them as one could be with two such peevish pelicans, until the day of my dismissal from the Club for illegibility.

I did not go jobless long. Among my friends and enemies of many nations and several races there is always employment to be found, for a little expenditure of shoe-leather. Yielding to the spirit of the city, one gradually acquires a comfortable Eastern feeling, like a garment grown soft from age and many washings, with regard to the future. Not only is Tante Manhattan's city the melting-pot of old nations to the point of nausea, in both the literary and literal usages of the word, but as I have written, it is beginning to show the Oriental tinge traceable in all great cities as they age, and vividly noticeable in Continental capitals. Beneath the arrant fakes and charlatanries is asserting itself a fatalistic character, half stridently aggressive, half let-it-go. In another century New York will be as cynical as London and Paris, though never so leathery as the former, and always more garish, more fantastic, than the latter. Bagdad-on-the-Subway, the name given to it in a Haroun-al-Raschid sense by the tragic romanticist O. Henry, may soon be applied to it realistically.

### III

THERE was a friend of O. Henry,



like him a writer and tragic fellow, who belonged by adoption, through Wrightstone, to our old brotherhood. He married a girl of the gay world, and drank and wrote himself to death before forty. His personality reminded me of dry peas shaken in a new tin pan, but he wrote clever stuff, all of it forgotten now, except a little of the worst, that the movies' ghouls have resurrected.

Of what will the movies not get hold? They have even taken Maisie Ellistoun, my friend, a finished actress and a brave old woman, and made her into a screen mothah. The work is a god-send to her, but what a comedian is in danger of corruption by their decay! My belief is that the story of her encounter with the Methodists belongs with the Seven Humorous Wonders of the World, and when she starts on a diving-tour among the submarine marvels and wreckage of the Theatrical Deep, the listener comes up for air only when absolutely forced. The eccentricities of Blythe, the Coghlan's clamour, travels with Modjeska! It is Madam Aeneas telling of another ruined Troy.

Perhaps worry about her is needless. When I last saw her the humour was still strong. She was rehearsing for Garry Tremaine, the great artist, the superlative director, and at the moment of my appearance was standing in a line with three other aged Juliets, going through the motions of telling beads toward a property wall, while the great artist dallied with Clarice De Hoogh, his newest gal. Obviously, the conspirators were playing for a question, and at last the Napoleon of the Fillums was foolish enough to ask it; whereat Maisie replied, on the High C of venom achieved only by old thespians, that they were doing penance for his sins. The great man lost his temper, and there ensued one of those typically professional scenes at which John Lorry, leading man for me when the Pantry Players toured Connecticut's swamps and pastures, used to wag his drunken head and ejaculate thinly:

"Ah, queens, queens; tragic queens!"

I went from the studio to dinner, cherishing gratitude toward Maisie for her wit and for the joy of knowing in her a woman to whom the world is neither farce nor problem play, but a comedy of manners. I wished that I had known her when she was young. She must have been at times a slasher, as when she ran the Methodists from Dan to Beersheba in the lobby of the old Auditorium Hotel, and finished by carrying off the bellwether's fiancé.

Chance took me to a bakery of the crop fathered by Prohibition, out of the War. As I sat down it seemed to me that I had not been in that particular one before, and when the waitress came to take my order I was sure of it.

She walked with a graceful, gliding balance utterly unlike that of the usual tray-toter, and her face drew from me the name:

"Clarice!"

Instead of demanding "Whaddya mean Clarice?" in the city's language of the day, she spoke to me in English, and I told her that she would soon see herself in motion pictures at the Rivolligh and Ryeallto Theayters, for she was the twin sister superficially of the De Hoogh, Tremaine's new favorite, whom I had just seen in process of exploitation.

She did not enthuse, and I learned afterward that she took me for an old masher of no great ingenuity. But the coincidence served as an introduction of a sort, and in the course of a week we were friends.

Lovely-Eyes is one of Tante Manhattan's better moods. She is so young, I wonder why she likes me, and sometimes tease her childishly to make certain that she does. Her history is of no importance; if you are a scientist, you study the soil from which a flower grows, but the artist, who is half super-scientist, half child, is more deeply concerned with the quality of the bloom. It is nothing to me that Lovely-Eyes has a dreadful mother.

I have shown her at the Museum the Old Woman Paring Her Nails, and



the Chinese jade, especially the perfect lotos in the central case; a Babe Ruth field day at the Polo Grounds; Pierre's, the Carlton, the Brazilian Coffee House, and sundry small peace-restoring oases which I will not betray by advertising; "The Jest," the Follies, "Jane Clegg," "What's In a Name," and "Clarence," also (by error) "The Hole in the Wall," and one or too other unintentional farces; the Library, Weehawken by ferry, the restaurant called unofficially *The Great Ships Go By*, the scenes of some famous murders, and Staten Island from a comfortable distance. I have not yet taken her to the Morgue or to any of the red-ink joints, and only sparingly to the chief chop suey houses. She has a cleanliness that somehow does not seem to clinch with Lar Boheem.

I myself am out of touch not only with Boheemier but with its opposite, the City's Corn Belt, and therefore am alienate from the old brotherhood, of which all other members seem to have placed themselves, or been more definitely placed by time, in those divisions. To the dyed-in-the-fustian denizen of Boheemier, my interpretation of interesting life with Tante Manhattan appears priggish; to the Corn Belters, successful souls and normal, it looks futilely Bohemian. Even the Guard has broken its thin red line.

The ruined Llama I have not seen for many moons except in passage. Du Lhut, who was to follow Goya, is lost in I know not what thin wash of magazine girls, a prey for Doctor Heart. The poet Wrightstone pops his eyes of gloom at me, reporting from his gigantic Ernestine that if I reappear at their connubial nest with subversive cynicism and crude comedy, she will turn loose her trusty Colt on me, instead of on the poet himself as often threatened. It would be like his sense of fitness to have invented the tale, but be that as may be, the usual order is reversed, since as a rule it is the husband who mentions shooting, not the wife. But Ernestine belongs logically enough to one of those occidental elements that

seems unable to outgrow the threat of murder and its collateral threat of suicide—unable to decide to do the deed or to cease to talk of it.

By this route I return to the two qualities for which especially I love Tante Manhattan: her primitive simplicity and her civilized indifference. She is now simple but not crude. She offers the best of the West and the best of the East—take your choice, accept or leave. She brings together an adaptation of Old World sophistication, and remembrance of the enthusiasm of the New.

Each wanderer loves his special city, I suppose; we are entitled to our preferences in cities, as in wines, if we can pay for them. Tante Manhattan's home is my preference, and I pay by throttling jobs of such interest as I can discover.

The joys of life one does not pay for so directly. There is the writing, for example. Money and my kind of writing, fortunately or otherwise, are not closely associated. And there are Lovely-Eyes and—of deeper and more subtle importance—Cleopatra. The women whom I love want money spent on them, but they do not gouge for it. I am leaving the gougers for the Corn Belt's softer hours! . . . And then the lights. Who has lights like Tante Manhattan's? Not London or Paris, and the Eastern cities are dark. You can see Tante Manhattan's lights for nothing, up and down Broadway and the great Avenues, and on the cross-streets that are treacherous as the neurotic crews they house.

I have heard New Orleans men say they would not exchange two blocks of Canal Street for all of Broadway; but I will give them Canal Street and Piccadilly and Central Avenue and Market Street, and I had nearly said the Boulevard des Italiens, and keep Broadway. Not the Rue Nationale in little Tours; I will not give that, for I am holding it to die in, if indeed I escape the seductive Dr. Berthold Baer and Campbell's Funeral Church. But in the meantime, Tante Manhattan's Broadway . . . the lights . . . the dreams.



# Desolation

*By Peter Dart*

**S** UDDENLY the city grew hushed. An occasional bell tolled dismally. The streets were deserted save for a few stragglers who hurried by with starved eyes and set faces as if to their execution. Among them were a few reluctant children, dragged by the hand.

The restaurants were silent and almost empty. Waiters looked from the windows in dismay. Men frantically sought their clubs for protec-

tion. Women and paralytics took refuge in the churches. Letter carriers had abandoned their wonted task and no letters came to anyone.

The outward roads were filled with flying automobiles bearing away the fortunate ones from the horror which had overtaken their city habitation. All the wealth of the world could not have relieved their plight for twenty-four hours . . .

It was Sunday in New York.



## Au Revoir

*By J. V. A. Weaver*

**D** ON'T kiss me! Not no more! . . . Oh, can't you see?  
Everythin's perfec' now, the way it is.

Why do I hafta fight and beg like this?  
It's been so sweet—now can't you leave things be?

Oh, now I hurt you. . . . Dear, don't look so sad—  
Ah, gee, I guess men ain't got ways to know  
How a girl feels, and when it's time to go,  
And how too much of even kisses is bad.

But it's the things you didn't just quite do,  
And what's left over for some other day  
That makes her hope and wonder and cry and pray,  
And tell herself, "Next time," and dream of you.

Good night, dear . . . please go on . . . it's for your sake . . .  
I'll dream about that kiss you didn't take. . . .



# The Future

*By John H. McNeely*

MARIE HANGARD fled from the courtroom almost in terror. Her mind was a whirlwind. Her fingernails penetrated the soft white skin of her hands as she compressed them with all her strength in a tremendous struggle to keep back a flood of tears.

What a terrible experience! What an ordeal! Fortunately there was a taxicab standing idly at the entrance to the huge, dirty, forbidding building: She ran to the curb in her panic, jumped into the cab, and ordered the chauffeur to drive to her apartment.

A shudder went over her as she threw herself back against the cushions. Instead of a feeling of relief, now that the dread and horror of it all was over, she felt her nerves taut and at the point of rupture. Her thoughts dwelled vividly upon the scenes through which she had just gone, and in which she was compelled to play the principal rôle.

Those lawyers! How crude and vulgar they were! Their rasping voices and their loud, noisy and vociferous wrangling threw her into a convulsion of trembling. So this was the way justice was administered! And she had been forced to take the witness-stand and testify before that cold, merciless, curious crowd. Even this supreme chagrin had not been spared her.

She would never forget the obscene old judge, with his austere and brutal indifference, sitting high on the bench looking down critically at her with his fishy, watery eyes. In them there was not a spark of compassion. He did not even interfere during the outrageous and scathing grilling that the prosecu-

tor gave her during the cross-examination. Not a word of protest did he offer while she was being dragged through that mire of obnoxious and disgusting falsehood.

The idea of the prosecutor daring to ask her those preposterous and insulting questions! His effrontery was unbelievable. How he had cast from his large, ugly mouth those gross insinuations against her character, and how helpless she was to resent them. What could he have meant when he asked her if she had ever left her apartment alone in the evening? She would remember to her dying day the enraptured leer of triumph that came over his face when she admitted that she had frequently gone out alone. Where was his manhood that he could cold-bloodedly put a defenseless and innocent woman on such a rack of torture? The whole crowd of them acted like a pack of wolves surrounding and trapping her.

Her own attorney behaved even worse than the others. Why had he not protected her against those birds of prey? Why did he sit supinely while malicious contumely was being hurled at her? It would have been easy for him to rise from his chair and put an end to the innuendoes so foully launched against her. He could have stopped those vulgar snickers from the spectators when she told the horrid tale of her married life—a tale that made her cheeks burn as if seared by fire. She remembered now that in her wild impulse to escape she had slipped away without even speaking to him.

And her husband! What a cad he has been through the proceedings! Her



blood boiled when she thought of him. How she loathed and despised him! And to think that she had once loved him as no other woman loved a man! He had stifled every gentle impulse in his headstrong determination to humiliate her. He had broken his deliberate pledge to her attorney that he would not contest her complaint for divorce. Where was his sense of decency? Of course, he had lost every virtue he ever possessed in the life of shame and abandon he was pursuing. And why had he not kept his word? To save himself a few paltry dollars of alimony!

How he had made her suffer! Yet she would have avoided separation. She would have made any sacrifice to have held her marital vows sacred. But he drove her to it. She could have excused him for his affair with the low Sinclair woman, with her broad, sensuous nose and her dry, straw-colored hair. She would have humbled herself before his treachery and unfaithfulness. She would have surrendered him to that common, tawdry, vicious creature. But when he became conspicuous and promiscuous her finer sensibilities rebelled. She could not bear to have her disgrace and her betrayal flaunted to the world.

The taxicab stopped abruptly. She alighted and made her way to her apartment in a sort of trance. At last it was over. She was free. Her nerves

became more quiet and her self-control returned in the peaceful and comforting atmosphere of her rooms. The future was before her. She could forget the past with all its bitter miseries and mental agonies. But what was she to do? The court had allowed her a hundred dollars a month alimony. She had remained long enough to hear the judge pronounce those words in his low, guttural voice. She could not live on that amount. It was so insignificant that she could not even dress on it.

She threw open the curtains of the windows and a brilliant light flooded the apartment. She would probably have to go to work. How she dreaded the thought of drudgery? She did not know typewriting or stenography. It would take her months to learn at some business college. She would perhaps be able to obtain employment as a clerk in a store, but the idea of being an ordinary shopgirl appalled her.

She walked across the room and sat down in front of the mirror at her dressing table. Her face was very pale. Yet the bloom of youth was still upon it. Her hair still hung gracefully over her forehead and there was that dimple as pretty as ever. She began suddenly to rouge her cheeks and a smile almost played on her lips.

Oh, yes, the future! She had decided what to do about that.



**N**O woman ever actually refuses a man; the most she ever does is to put him into cold storage for a while.



**I**F you like the present time, it is here. If you dislike it, it is going. What more can you ask?





# An American

By Clarkson Crane

## I

**D**URING that last winter of the war, when the fronts were like two frozen seas opposing one another with brittle lifted surf, I ran across, by a curious chance, Denham Blair, once a schoolmaster of mine, whom I had not seen for many years. Really, I had almost forgotten him; and his appearance (he passed by me—that was all) not only left me with vivid impressions of himself, which I shall try to set down, but filled me with memories of my dead boyhood. This is the way it happened:

I first heard him mentioned one afternoon when I returned from post. Entering the dark hovel where we lived (in times of peace it had been a stable) I saw the second sergeant in the doorway working away at a punching bag that swung before him on a cord, attached at one end to a rusty hook in the ceiling, at the other to a cleat in the floor. He was naked to the waist and looked very white against the darkness inside. Behind him against the opposite wall a high mirror stood, with a gilded frame, dimly reflective, which we had found long ago in the half-ruined house next door. His feet well apart in the mud, the sergeant kept looking over his shoulder into the glass, moving his arms vigorously and swelling his chest.

When I passed, he said, stopping a moment and breathing deeply:

"Hullo." Then: "Foreign Legion's in town."

I was too full of my surroundings to pay much attention to his words, though I had noticed khaki-colored uniforms around the village. Anyway, his ex-

treme activism always irritated me. It was a saturated day, with a grey sky over shabby stone and plaster walls, and I had left my ambulance quickly, knocking off the switch, thinking only of the stove ahead of me. Underfoot, the mud was pitted and greasy. And, crossing the road, I could see mist over there on the river. When a man's soul turns grey in such a world and he forgets even to desire, becoming formless and passive inside like a puddle of stagnant water, he is said to suffer from *cafard*.

That is the way I felt and the others looked, in there around the stove. Beyond them, in the darkest end of our dwelling, was a tiny yellowish oblong of oiled canvas, a sickly window.

I remember catching a glance of the sailor's gold teeth, as I walked in. He was sitting on the edge of a broken chair, as he sat hour after hour, his head bent forward, his knees separated, as if trying to surround the stove. And three or four others were lying on the bunks nearby doing nothing. While I was drawing off my gloves, Tommy said, destroying the silence:

"He came from around the bay."

The words drifted away like smoke, unconnected, uncalled for, as far as I could see; and the silence enveloped us again, rapidly, almost threateningly. Finally, when no one resumed the thread, I asked:

"Who came from around the bay?"

Tommy said, after a while, "Oh, a fellow," and let his head fall back against a roll of blankets.

But the sailor, pressing the end of a stick against the stove door (he meant to open it soon), answered, his head on one side:



"A fellow in the Foreign Legion, an American. He's quartered right next door, came in here this morning. When he knew"—clatter of the stove door—"we were from California"—crunch and crackle of new wood,—"he said he came from around San Francisco."

I suppose my curiosity was a bit active because I had come so recently from the open air. At any rate, lying on my back among someone's blankets with my overcoat still around me, I kept turning the matter over rather sluggishly in my mind. The invigorated flames hummed beneath the metal casing of the stove. Finally, I asked:

"What else did he have to say?"

Silence. Then the sailor murmured:

"Oh, nothing much," and Tommy said:

"He's a nice-looking fellow."

That was all they knew, apparently; at least all they would say. I remember deciding that the former was the case: they had found out nothing more; and I felt vaguely surprised, and a little angry, as one will feel angry at trifles, living in a swamp of ennui. I felt sure that if I had found, in this way, an American, a "nice looking fellow" in the Foreign Legion, I should have learned more about him.

"He may come in to-night," Tommy suggested.

But the sailor, who knew more than the others, said:

"No, he won't. He got picked for some detail or other. Getting barbed wire or digging a trench or something. He won't be here till tomorrow."

Just then, in the dark end of the quarters, under the yellow window, the two men on kitchen police, walking around the long table that rested on saw horses, began dealing out tin plates like playing cards, tossing them quickly so that they spun clattering for a moment, and came to rest at length on the wooden surface, making a tiny, abrupt sound like a grunt. Then followed the gushing rattle of forks and spoons. This was called "setting the table."

## II

I SAW him on the day after and recognized him.

All that morning, while I was pouring gasoline and oil into my car, and cleaning spark-plugs, I kept thinking of the soldiers who had spent a night or two in the adjoining house during the winter and passed on. They would come, infantry, artillery, trench-mortars; and we would see them about for a while, standing in the doorway or drawing water from an old well in the ransacked garden out behind. And soon they would vanish, departing at some dim hour of the morning, away into the black silence of the winter night.

Only those of us who slept lightly would hear them: murmured commands and shuffling in the snow; the jingle of a pack as a straggler trotted out to the alignment; then a word bringing quick, rigid silence; finally a melting away into sound and movement, stamping feet, words, laughter, clinking metal, going away, more and more remote . . .

When I entered the cantonment about noon, he was there, sitting before the stove on the chair which the sailor usually occupied. He had his arms on his knees and was leaning forward, holding a cap in his hands.

Drawing near, I saw one tanned, rather gaunt cheek above the yellowish, ill-fitting uniform, and one side of a drooping brown mustache. There was nothing familiar about the profile—nothing. I have wondered why that was so;—doubtless, because in those days when I knew him, he always sat behind his desk, facing and slightly above us. And he had come gradually to assume that position in our minds almost symbolically.

He turned when I walked toward him, and I heard some one off to the side in a hurried voice commence an introduction. What light there was from outside came upon him, showing me his head, bald in a curious limited way that made his forehead seem very high. And the straight, delicate nose—I could not mistake that. I stopped.



"Mr. Blair," I said, instinctively.

He did not move, only looking up at me, blinking, his face reddened from the heat of the stove. It was evident he did not remember. Then, rising to his feet and letting his cap fall to the ground, he took a step toward me, peering into my face with his head forward; and a rapid glint seemed to pass across his eyes as of fear, swift and vanishing. He muttered:

"What! What!"

For an instant, while he stood there, I saw him in a flash as I used to know him, clean shaven, quiet, sitting there before us at his desk in the school-room, with the yellow sunlight entering through the window and lying in broken rays on the floor and the wide chair arms. When I told him my name, he sat down again, seeming relaxed all at once, looking at me again and again, and smiling in that sudden, timorous way of his. Then he said:

"Yes, yes, of course, of course," and turning to the others, "Isn't that strange?"

While I explained to them that Denham Blair had been my Latin teacher in a Berkeley school, he examined my face now and then, smiling thoughtfully; and when I had finished and the platitudes of surprise had come duly forth, he said, half laughing, with a side gesture of his arm:

"I use to teach him Latin Grammar." Then, as if wondering at something: "Latin Grammar."

"But when did you leave the school?"

His laugh faded and he looked at me for a moment in silence.

"Not long after you did—a year or two. But don't you remember? Didn't you know?"

I said quickly: "No—what?" and then it all came back to me, the memory of Denham Blair, bearing with it tatters and fragments of vanished days, as if the man himself were running toward me through a sombre forest, covered with clinging bits from the foliage around him.

"Yes, I remember."

Long after I had left Berkeley, when

my school days were retreating and standing out in brittle, colored pictures, a letter had told me of the affair. My correspondent had written: "You should hear what the people say! It's screaming. And the men, too, as bad as the rest."

He had written something like that, and had added, "Really I didn't know the old boy had it in him."

That sentence, of all the letter, remained complete in my mind, and, looking at Denham Blair as he sat there before the stove, preparing to roll a cigarette from the heavy tobacco of the soldiers, I wondered why he had always impressed us that way. Old boy! He couldn't have been more than thirty at the time.

When I read the letter long ago, I thought the matter natural enough, and felt repelled by the unsympathetic publicity which had rendered it sordid. Then, of course, there was Blair's position of a school teacher. But what business was it of theirs—all those smug people who had managed their own lives more adroitly? And as for the type of woman—well, that was his own business.

Holding the cigarette in both hands, he moistened the edge, smoothed down the paper, and placing it thoughtfully between his lips, struck a match against the stove, and raised the flame to the emerging, brown strands. When a glow ate away the white edge, he threw down the match and turned toward me, blowing out smoke. I said again:

"I remember."

And he nodded.

Just then the sailor entered, in greasy overalls, a smudge of oil on his temple under the yellow hair. Saying "hullo" to Blair, he sat down on a box nearby, holding out his hands to the stove, and began to ask him about a machine gun that he had just seen outside the house next door.

While Blair talked, with the cigarette before him so that the smoke climbed up beside his face, his left hand holding the cap for which he had groped, while



speaking, upon the floor, I watched him sitting there, and let my thoughts travel back to those days in California.

Looking at his roughened, tanned face, his uncut hair, the loose, discoloured uniform, I couldn't help smiling, making clear comparisons, remembering the white forehead I had known. But it was a smile tinged with a shadow of rapid wonder (or was it fear?) a feeling of humiliation before the swift forces that pluck a man up and toss him half-way around the world. Perhaps I should think of them as within Denham Bair, these forces, fusing into the private destiny that drove him on, unwinding in his pocket like a ball of string.

Anyway, forgetting the dead, grey moon outside, I almost felt the warmth of distant air, and saw the manifold, varied green of foliage dozing in the sun. It was Blair's high, bare forehead that returned most vividly to me. We used to call it a "dome" and make innumerable jokes about it, which seemed amusing at the time. I think that every class, as it came along, thought and said exactly the same things, probably without knowing it. But they made the hours pass, which was all-important, and we never were sure whether Blair even noticed our observations. He always was preoccupied.

One incident was still so real.

During a hot early afternoon, when the shades over the windows were pulled down and the light, coming through them, was yellow, we were lying back in our chairs, steeping in a soft lethargy, awaiting the end of the hour. No one could translate. No one wanted to. Even Blair was listless and absent-minded. But when boy after boy, drawing himself up in his chair, at the sound of his name, stammered irrelevant words, and then looked up dumbly, Blair's impatience grew in the heat, and his brow reddened. This blushing was one of the things about him that amused us so: we thought of his head as a thermometer filled with pinkish liquid; and, seeing it now, we began to glance at

one another, bending closer to our books.

He sat there, opening and closing his lips, calling resignedly all the names. After each failure a little burst of laughter came; and soon there was a feeling in the room, as if the air were full of fine wires tightly drawn. Suddenly a fly, coming through the yellow, warm light, paused on his bald forehead. He brushed it away. It returned. He waved his hand once more angrily; and once more it came back. Laughter trickled along the line of chairs, shattering the tense air. Very red, Blair rose to his feet, and walking to the window, rolled up the shade quickly, and then jerked it down again. The fly still circled around his head. I don't know what would have happened if the buzzer hadn't sounded. There was a clattering of chairs and a rush for the door.

On another day, I don't know how long after, I entered his room with a paper in my hand, wishing to ask him a question. He was behind his desk, stooping over and tugging at a drawer; and he seemed so agitated that I stood for a moment in the doorway. He tugged and tugged. But it didn't open. And, at last, stamping his foot and raising his head, he began to shake and rattle the drawer, screwing up his mouth. There was such a strange, desperate look on his face that I withdrew softly, going away down the hall on tip-toe.

Those were the memories prominent in my mind.

I had not been listening to the conversation; but when my thoughts returned to the dark quarters, with the chill of winter outside, they were talking of battles in which Blair had taken part. I heard him say:

"I have been wounded twice."

Exclamations rippled around among them.

He nodded his head, repeating: "Yes, I have been wounded twice," and began to show them where.

During lunch, he sat beside me, saying very little. Once, when someone mentioned the end of the war, he said,



"Oh," quickly, shrugging his shoulders and tossing one hand into the air. But through all the meal, I felt that he was on the point of saying something to me, something that wouldn't come out; and I waited.

But he went away shortly after we had finished eating, walking out between the damp stone walls, and glancing at his reflection in the gilt framed mirror. He would come back, he told us, on the following day.

### III

It was afternoon before he appeared, hesitating in the doorway and looking toward the stove. When we all urged him to come in, he walked forward slowly, and said, stopping before me:

"Don't you want to take a walk? I've been working on the company papers all morning. The records and accounts, you know."

The air was motionless when we stepped out onto the creased snow. Between the jagged walls of crushed houses we could see the rounded hills, looking like dead creatures covered up, and facing us, above the street, the village church of roughened grey stone, almost undamaged, standing against the sky. Walking down the slope toward the river, we looked out over the flat, white valley into the mist that hung there.

Until we reached the canal, which ran between two rows of trees about one hundred yards before we came to the river, Blair said nothing, only clearing his throat. We could hear a sullen grumble of cannon coming from another sector, and, as we turned to go north along a towpath, a brittle crust crackled beneath our feet.

Glancing toward the half-frozen, sluggish canal, he said:

"Did you tell them all about me?"

"No; just what I heard you say: that you had left Berkeley, were sick of teaching school. Why?"

"Oh, nothing. It doesn't make any difference. I just wondered. I don't care at all, you know."

I said: "Of course not."

And he faced me suddenly, his eyes flashing, and exclaimed:

"I don't. I don't. I don't care about anything. Not anything."

We walked in silence under the black trees, beside portly canal boats perpetually moored.

Finally, he said, his eyes roving along the ground:

"I've been saying that I went away, that I came to France, that I did this and that. It's all wrong. At least I think it's all wrong." He hesitated a moment. "Have you ever felt that you were riding along on destiny—like—like—well like a lost hat on a puff of wind?"

He did not wait for me to answer, adding hurriedly:

"I've had no one to talk to, no one, no one. It's been terrible. I keep thinking of so many things,—no, that's not the way it was. It was, more than myself, much more. Something outside me seemed to do it.

"You know," he laughed quietly, "everything seemed to come to a head at once. For a while I thought it unnecessary, all of it. I think it would have blown over, if something hadn't made me flare up and tell Cummings what I thought of him. You remember Cummings? Or was he made principal after you left? Well, he pulled away at the ends of his grey mustache and said: 'Very well, Mr. Blair; you have said quite enough!' The top of his head was bald and undulating. I seemed to hate that part of him more than anything else. Queer, isn't it, how one will feel? I never could understand how I work. Well, ten years came up through me when I talked to him."

He repeated, "Yes," and then chuckled, walking on without speaking.

The tow-path curved gently; and, far away across the river, we began to see, emerging from the mist, a line of poplars. Long, narrow bridges, at intervals, reached towards them.

"But what did you do then?" I asked.

"Oh, I felt free." He raised both arms and dropped them quickly to his



sides. "I thought, 'Now I'm out of it. I'm adrift.' And I wanted to go somewhere, far away, where I'd be different. I really thought I would be, you know. And so I hurried back to my room, threw a few things into a bag, and took a car for San Francisco. I hadn't yet any—any—oh, call it chagrin, conventionalized chagrin. I had some—afterwards. But then I just felt free, and life seemed very simple, as if I could do anything. I swore that I should never cross the bay again. Isn't it funny that I can still hear the rattle of the Key Route train during that ride—not other rides?"

He stopped talking, and walked along, silently, over the hard ground; but I said nothing, feeling sure that he would continue. The cannon grumbled up there to the north. He exclaimed:

"They're afraid of life, those people. They don't respect it. And what else is there for us to respect, if it isn't life and human passion? Why do we keep looking over our heads when we have all that?"

There were more quiet moments which only our footsteps on the breaking crust disturbed. He went on:

"Well, everything happened as I expected, and soon I went away by myself. I did a good many different things—just lived as I wanted to, whims—my own whims. I reached this—business, finally. It is not important how. I felt so free, I still do. Really, I wasn't lost like the hat on the puff of wind. I was going my own way. Shall we turn back?"

We halted near a heavy, submerged canal-boat, tilted onto its side, and stood without speaking, feeling the world all about steep silently in its moisture. Over the valley the mist was rising; we could see the line of poplars now more clearly.

Facing me abruptly, he asked:

"Do you love life? Do you want to live every day? I didn't once. I loathed it. And you hate it now. I can see. It's just a heavy stone for you, that you're pushing onward through a fog,

without any reason, while idiots gibber all around in the dark. That's the way I felt long ago.

"Now I love life: I love the colour, the beat of it. I suppose—I suppose it's because I don't care. I—" he stopped, turning from me, with a low, apologetic laugh, and stared away toward the vague rounded hills, flattening down with his shoe a roughened mound of snow. Then, raising his head quickly:

"I haven't talked with any one for so long, really talked I mean. How could I? They wouldn't listen. They'd say: 'He talks too much about himself. What a bore he is!' But if they would only listen. You listen—You know, when I'm in a tight place, I can go right on, with a feeling of scorn for it all. I think scorn is the word. We'll call it that anyway,—for want of a better one. But I've had the feeling often—as if,—as if—nothing mattered."

He hesitated again, and then, smiling almost sheepishly, said, stammering a little:

"I—I sometimes think of it to myself, of life, I mean, as a warm shining ball, very fragile, that I hold in my hand. I toss it up into the air, away up, without caring much whether I catch it or not. And often I wonder if it wouldn't be better to throw it right down onto the ground, and—and let it go at that."

While we walked back to the village beside the dead waiting canal, he spoke very little, keeping his hands in his pockets, and kicking at particles of frozen snow. Once, as if half to himself, he muttered:

"You must go to the end of yourself. Do you know the French expression, *jusqu'au boutiste*? One who goes to the bitter end. That is what one must be. Sometimes I wonder where I am going."

I glanced at his calm, browned face with the thin drooping mustache, and the eyes, holding that dull smoulder in them. Yes, I suppose it was true. Blair was a *jusqu'au boutiste* in his way; but I wondered vaguely, feeling



that he had made a conquest of something, if he were not still uncertain, jealous of his victory.

We turned and climbed the soft road toward the church. Just before he vanished into his billet, he faced me once more, and said:

"I'll come in to-morrow. I have a friend I want to bring—a Pole."

#### IV

WE were all around the stove when he came the next morning. The Pole, who followed him timidly, smiling repeatedly and laughing when anyone addressed him, was a short, thin man with a yellow mustache. I have forgotten his name. He spoke occasionally in broken French, with a soft, rolling accent, and seemed pleasantly surprised at anything he saw. Two or three times he asked, "You used to know him?" Then he would look admiringly at Blair out of his pale wet blue eyes.

"I can't wait, I can't wait," Blair told us nervously. "I must go with the sergeant after supplies—*ravitaillement*."

Then, drawing me aside, he said: "You see, he is the only one I talk to. And in French. It is not like speaking one's own language."

He went away then into the grey cold, looking behind over his shoulder and smiling. The little Pole followed at his heels.

In the doorway, Blair paused for a moment, and, leaning forward, examined his face in the tall mirror with the gilt frame. Then he seemed to snatch himself away.

That was the last time I saw him; for in the morning he was gone, his company having stolen away silently during the muffled, hollow night; and the house next door was vacant again and still. But I always kept that final picture in my mind; Denham Blair, in his baggy, yellowish uniform, standing with the creamy mud on his shoes, staring long at his own tanned face in the high glass.

S. Set—Nov.—8

#### V

WINTER ended, and the immobility of the front broke up like ice in spring torrents. During that last, tumultuous March of the war, I often thought of Denham Blair, walking quietly, with his sombre face, among all that crowd, "thinking of many things." Where was he going, I always wondered, a man whom this America of ours, so disheveled and unthinking, had cast forth with a mighty sweep of the arm to wander dazed over the earth?

Once I received a letter, a few scrawled lines. But he only wrote about the weather; and toward the end he tried to be humorous. I have forgotten what he said, but I know he tried to be humorous.

Then days poured down upon me, making the letter only a memory. It was two or three months later, on a hot, clear, midsummer day, while we were up in the Aisne, near Attichy, that the sailor told me:

"I saw some of the Foreign Legion back there," pointing to the hills across the river. "In the first village you come to on the road to Pierrefonds."

I found his company there a day or two later, quartered in a large courtyard with yellow manure piles and white plaster walls. The smoke from a round black rolling kitchen climbed into the blue sky. Soldiers in khaki-coloured uniforms were lazy all about us in the warmth.

I asked a tall Arab if he knew Blair, but the man shook his head; then while looking about me, suddenly I heard some one saying: "Oh! Ah! Ah!" in a small voice, and, turning, saw the little Pole, running toward me, his hands lifted. He stopped before me, panting, apparently unable to speak. But, looking at his face, I guessed what he couldn't say.

"He's dead?"

The small man nodded and then gripped my arm in both his hands.

"Yes, yes, yes. Oh, this cursed war! This cursed life! Why did he have to be killed. He was wonderful! Won-



derful!" He used the word *épatant*, *épatant*! "I never met a man like him."

I thought tears were coming from his eyes; but probably they were always watery like that.

He went on: "It was all unnecessary. He was killed far behind the lines, so far. It wasn't right. And only one shell came. It was during a relief. We were walking along a road far, far behind the trenches. He was near me. All at once, *rrrrowff*—a shell broke in the field about twenty metres away. just one shell. And he fell down. But only one shell!"

Releasing my arm, he repeated, "Just one shell," and said "*Rrrrowff*!" again, making a quick gesture with his hands. Then:

"Bah! They call that war when a man can be killed far behind the lines. He died right away, quietly."

There were men walking about us in the sunlight. The walls of the houses, usually dirty, seemed very white and warm.

I watched the Pole's thin face. He added:

"Quietly. He didn't say a word."

Quickly and quietly. Good enough. Yet, looking back, all the rest of it seemed such a waste of time. I wanted to shrug my shoulders and turn away. What *was* the use?

The Pole exclaimed suddenly: "He knew how to live, that man!"

We stood there in the sunlight looking at one another.



## The Match

By *Louis Untermeyer*

DO you recall our first few moments together,  
Or do you forget?  
You stammered and said something vague about the weather;  
I offered a cigarette

And took one for myself; and there were snatches  
Of laughter as you tried  
To keep aflame those weak, half-hearted matches  
That flickered and died.

Finally, with an effort, you succeeded;  
And, shielding it with your hand,  
You offered me the only spark I needed.  
You did not understand

When, as I leaned to you and the flame leaped higher  
And you would not let it go,  
I warned you, laughing, you were playing with fire . . .  
Now you know!





# The Seeker of a Secret

By John Hanlon

THE SINGER

A STAR shone high in the evening  
sky;  
Stars are too beautiful to die;  
It has fallen.

A blood-red rose poured forth its  
breath;  
Fragrant things should never know  
death;  
It has faded.

Love and I on the pathway trod;  
Love should endure as long as God;  
It has ended.

THE SEEKER OF A SECRET

Who are you?

THE SINGER

A singer of sad songs.

THE SEEKER

But beyond that—? I know you  
sing, I know your songs are sad.

THE SINGER

I am a woman who has loved. That  
is my tragedy, my comedy—which,  
those who read my life may choose.

THE SEEKER

I am sorry—

THE SINGER

Sorrow avails nothing. Long ago I  
discovered that you could not make  
mortar out of tears to rebuild tall tow-  
ers that had fallen into ruins. Now I  
sing instead of weeping. Listen!

Life is the thorn when the rose is dead,  
Life is the laugh when eyes are sad,  
Life is only the sister of death,  
And death is the kinder.

THE SEEKER

Oh please don't sing such dreadful  
things! Don't be so unhappy!

THE SINGER

I must be unhappy; that is the only  
way I know that I am alive.

THE SEEKER

But why do you call yourself a wom-  
an who has loved and think that  
everything ends with that? Why, the  
world is filled with love. It may come  
to you again.

THE SINGER

Oh no. This is another of my songs  
and I know it is a true one.

Those who say love comes often, lie.  
I who have seen it pass, should know  
Flowers that once have blossomed die.

Can age-dry rivers ever flow?  
Those who say love comes often, lie.  
I who have seen it pass should know  
Flowers that once have blossomed  
die.

THE SEEKER

Don't you do anything all day but  
sit here and sing?

THE SINGER

Yes. I sift my ashes.



## THE SEEKER

Ashes? That great heap at your feet?  
But they're funny looking ashes, some  
of them are amethyst, and some are  
scarlet, and some gleam just like gold.

## THE SINGER

They're not the sort of ashes you're  
thinking about; they're memories and  
dreams that never came true. I sift  
them to find some tiny trifle that the  
flames have spared. See, this is the  
first flower he ever gave me, a violet  
he found under the willows one April.  
And this is one of the little shoes of  
the baby that never was born.

## THE SEEKER

But why do you throw them back  
among the ashes again? Could you not  
keep them?

## THE SINGER

When I find them and my fingers  
touch them, they become scorched like  
all the others. Listen!

*Beauty brings joy, light-hearted  
As willows in the rain.  
Alas, that hand in hand with joy,  
Beauty brings pain.*

*There is a song that wakes a heart  
Silent for many years;  
But all old songs, no matter how gay,  
Can fill the eyes with tears.*

## THE SEEKER

If I were you, I should close the

door tightly upon the past. I should  
live for today.

## THE SINGER

Today means loneliness.

## THE SEEKER

But tomorrow—

## THE SINGER

To live for tomorrow one must  
dream. And dreaming is useless. I  
should only dream that some day he  
would come back again.

## THE SEEKER

But he might—

## THE SINGER

Once finis is written across a chap-  
ter, it can never reopen.

## THE SEEKER

Is finis ever written?

## THE SINGER

*I listened to the song of a thrush,  
Praying that it might never hush;  
It is silent.*

*There were great gods in the long ago.  
A god is too great to fall, I know;  
Yet their twilight came.*

*Why should love, which is oh so frail,  
Live where a thousand things must  
fail;—  
And love is done?*



NEARLY all the good epigrams start with "Love is—." Most of the best  
ones end with "Love was—."





# The Women of Our Block

*By Francis Wierman*

WE had almost forgotten Lizzie Althouse, it was so long since we had seen her. Then, one night, she came home again. We heard her arrive about two o'clock, so it was really morning when she came home, rather than night. A taxi rattled down our block and stopped before the Althouse home on the corner.

Those of us who were not awakened by the unaccustomed noise of a taxi, were, a few seconds later, roused by vigorous jerkings of the Althouse door-knob, bangs on the windows, a masculine shout of "Hey, in there, wake up!" and a shrill feminine call, "For the love of Pete, mom, let me in!"

Mom replied out of a second-story window, the door was opened and banged shut, the taxi rattled away, and our block subsided.

We said to ourselves, or to each other: "There's that Lizzie Althouse come home again!" and went to sleep once more.

We nice women affected to be very much shocked at Lizzie's return; but in reality we were glad of it. It gave us something new to talk about.

The next morning we all read the papers carefully before breakfast. We scanned the columns for news of raids in the Tenderloin. Yes, there had been one the night before on Butterworth street, off Spring. There was a list of girls and of men who had been arrested, but Lizzie's name was not among them. Lizzie always got away. For the truth was that Lizzie Althouse was one of those outcast women called "bad." Some people called her by another word; but we on our block never

used that word. We just said that she was "bad."

It was a bright, cheery morning. So, as soon as possible after breakfast, the women who had babies brought them out for an airing. The women who had no babies brought brooms and dust-cloths, and made a pretense of cleaning their porches and pavements.

We discussed the details of Lizzie's homecoming. We speculated on the reasons why she was never in that crowd shoved into the "wagon" and off to jail. We wondered what color her hair would be this time, and what her clothes would be like. After awhile our curiosity was satisfied.

Lizzie bounced out of the Althouse front door, took her seat on the porch, and proceeded to stare us all out of countenance. Her hair was auburn this time, but scanty and flat looking, for she had no switch on. Lizzie was twenty-two years old, but she looked forty in the pitiless morning light. Her eyes had the flattened, vacant look that belongs to her class, and her skin was hard and yellow. She was dressed in a many-hued kimona, slimpy and torn. She wore silk stockings and a green silk petticoat. On one foot was a red bedroom slipper, and on the other a black leather pump.

As she sat slowly rocking on the porch, staring down the curious women, Lizzie was certainly the apotheosis of weariness, of dishevelment, of lost virtue. One could scarcely believe that she was only twenty-two, and had, at fifteen, been the prettiest girl in the school.

And yet, she did show traces of beauty. There was beauty still, in the



back of her neck, there was liteness in her body; there was a subtle grace in the lines of her white arms, when she raised them.

Besides, we women knew how pretty she could be when she "fixed up." We knew that after lunch she would disappear, and then come out again, a different Lizzie. We were anxious to see that transformation. None of the women on our block knew much about the mysterious art of "fixing up."

A few men passed down the street, on their way to or from work. Some of them walked slowly past Lizzie, leering at her. Lizzie yawned and gazed past them.

Lizzie's methods with the men were as interesting to us as were her clothes and her escapes from the raiding police. She was as cold and business-like about her trade as if she were selling thread in a department store. When she was not plying this trade, she was as circumspect as any of us. Some of us even suspected that Lizzie was not as they say on the stage, an immoral woman, but an un-moral one; that she did not possess elements of wickedness so much as she lacked elements of goodness. Lizzie finally, that morning, stared us all entirely out of countenance. So we retired to our backyards and discussed her over our fences.

Poor twenty-two year-old Lizzie! To the strangers who had moved into our midst we recounted her sordid story. To begin with, she had a "no-account father" and a drunken mother; and up to her fifteenth year she lived in an atmosphere of brawls, cursings and buffetings.

The Althouses were even then social outcasts, and Lizzie, in spite of her beauty and her eager little attempts at friendliness, was predestined to get nothing but the cold shoulder. She was "one of those Althouses." At fifteen years of age Lizzie's love of finery led her into the clutches of a Chinese laundryman. A "social worker" hauled Lizzie into court, and the Chinaman disappeared. Lizzie was sent to the

House of Correction for six months to reform her.

What went on in that gloomy stone pile during those six months? None of us knew. But we did know that Lizzie went in an ignorant, frightened young girl, and came out a hardened "tough" girl. She took up her residence in the Tenderloin, and only appeared among us at irregular intervals.

In the afternoon of her first day at home this time Lizzie suddenly appeared on the street on her way "downtown." She was painted, and her head was covered with bands of auburn curls. She wore a great showy hat and was in the very latest fashion in every detail. Lizzie had good taste in dress and understood the art of make-up. This was the transformation which we women on the block had been waiting to see.

By what means did Lizzie change herself from a yellow, haggard wreck to an attractive young girl? We knew the theories of the process. But none of us had ever seen it done, much less tried it on ourselves. From across the street Lizzie looked remarkably pretty, and she walked well, which none of us did.

The women of our block, watching her from behind curtains, sniffed and sneered; but we suffered small pangs of jealousy. We liked pretty clothes, too; but none of us had them. There were too many children's shoes to buy, too many doctor's bills, too many of all kinds of bills. Such were our thoughts as we watched her swing gracefully out of sight around the corner on her way downtown.

We knew that she would return later with some sort of a man. Then we would wax indignant; threaten to move; to write a piece to our paper; to tell "somebody." But none of us ever did any definite thing.

Everyone in our neighborhood knew about Lizzie and her "business," except the policeman on our beat. They never heard any of the Althouse noises; and Lizzie was apparently invisible to



policemen, which seems to us a suspicious circumstance!

In our city a reform administration had just come into power, and a perfect fury of raiding followed. The men and women of the underworld all scurried to cover, out of the way of the cleansing municipal cyclone. Consequently Lizzie remained at home for some time, to disturb our peace of mind, and keep our tongues delightfully busy.

There were several terrifying fights between Lizzie and her mother, a dreadful old witch, whom we suspected had delivered her daughter into the Chinese laundryman's power.

There was the time that four tipsy sailors came at once, drank beer on the Althouse porch, and reached the maudlin stage of drunkenness. Then they sang old songs and even hymns. One of them, a mere boy, in a sweet tenor, sang about "Your mother dear, No matter how low down your end, She waits to greet you with a smile, And always proves your firmest friend!" It was beautiful and pathetic and horrible, all at the same time.

We learned that, "downtown," Lizzie discarded her ugly first name, and was known as Lucille Althouse. We all laughed and sneered at that. Poor Lizzie! She was just giving an evidence of her good taste, her reaching out after something more refined than the Althouse family could give her.

Every day our curious eyes and ears were turned toward that house on the corner. And every day our respectable tongues lashed away at the occupants of that house.

## II

ONE afternoon Lizzie returned from a trip downtown rather early. She rushed into the house, and shortly reappeared, dressed in a plain black skirt, a cheap white shirtwaist, and one of her mother's work aprons! A jaunty little dustcap (evidently new) rested on her auburn curls, and in one of her hands was a dust-rag!

What next! we asked of each other,

in a new astonishment. Lizzie had never been known to "lift a hand" at housework nor any kind of work. Had she reformed, and was she about to do some real work?

Lizzie, as usual, seemed entirely unconscious of the comment she was exciting. Sometimes she looked back across the vacant lot at one side of her house. Again, she would lean forward and look up to the other corner. She was evidently expecting someone—a man, of course. But why array herself in a cap and apron and a dust-rag? Were the police coming, after all, and was her domestic appearance for their benefit? We rejected this explanation. If there had been any chance of the police coming, Lizzie would not stand on the order of her going, but go!

As we watched her, Lizzie's eyes suddenly brightened. She jumped up and began very slowly, but gracefully, to wipe the dust off a porch chair.

We looked up at the far corner of our block and saw a Blond Giant coming down the street. He looked at the numbers on the houses.

There was something different about this young man. We knew, from Lizzie's manner, that he was the one she was waiting for.

He was neither brazen nor furtive, as were the other men who came to see Lizzie. His manner was deliberate, his eyes were frank and clear, his whole appearance clean.

What gave him this clean look we did not know, unless it was his teeth. They were teeth such as one seldom sees, very white and perfect. It was undoubtedly Lizzie's house number for which he was looking. But why had she given the scene such a domestic setting? The Blond Giant took off his hat most politely to Lizzie. We who were near heard him say:

"Hello, Lucy, here I am!"

But what was the matter with Lizzie? She scarcely raised her eyes to the blond giant. The dust-rag shook, proving that her hands were trembling. She bit her underlip, then she said, very quietly:



"Yes. I—do you want to sit on the porch?"

"Sure!" responded the Blond Giant.

So they sat down on the porch rockers. They looked at each other, and it was impossible not to see that they were in love! We did not even debate the question.

There could be no misinterpretation of the look that passed between Lizzie and the Blond Giant. It was actually the real thing! There was silence on our block for the space of five minutes. Then we all retreated indoors and to backyards and alleys, to discuss this new astounding angle to Lizzie.

The Blond Giant stayed for a long while on the Althouse's front porch. Mom came out, and was formally introduced to him. He rose and bowed to her. She seemed overcome at this mark of respect, and stood grinning like an imbecile. Blond Giant fished around in his pockets and brought out a little box of candy, which he gave to Lizzie. Then he went away.

Lizzie looked after him till he had turned the corner. Then she jerked off the cap and apron, threw them into the front door, together with the dust-rag.

She sat on the porch again, for fully two hours, chin on hand, and—dreaming! As all girls in love will dream. She laid one hand on the arm of the chair where he had been sitting, and her mouth, always pretty, curved into a lovely smile.

The Blond Giant returned the following day, and we then learned that his name was Harry. And that was all we ever found out about him. He and Lizzie sat decorously on the porch and talked very politely.

On the third day Harry brought a letter and a little box of snapshots. He read the letter aloud to Lizzie, but we did not believe she heard a word of it, from the rapt look on her face. She exclaimed girlishly over his snapshots, and coquettishly stole one, and ostentatiously hid it in her pocket.

Once, over the snapshots, the blond head and the auburn one came very close together. Lizzie drew back con-

sciously. It was not a trick. In the presence of Harry, Lizzie became a really modest girl. The Lizzie we had known disappeared utterly.

No other men appeared after Harry began coming. Lizzie ceased going "downtown." She lived only for those visits of Harry, who came regularly every afternoon.

Then he did not come for awhile. Lizzie then transferred her attentions to the postman, who rewarded her with numerous letters and postcards.

Then Harry returned, and this time he took up his abode in the Althouse home. He pruned the two trees in front of the house, he planted geraniums in cans in the backyard, he slapped the younger Althouse girl when she was impudent. He was one of the family.

We wondered how long the affair would last. Surely it would not go on like that indefinitely! Harry must know what Lizzie was, or rather, had been, for she seemed to have abandoned her former manner of life altogether. Could he not see that she was painted, and that her hair was dyed? Did he not know that her name was Lizzie, and not Lucy, as he always called her? Who was he? We received no answers to any of these questions.

### III

ONE day Harry went downtown, and when he turned the corner on his return he whistled to Lizzie, who, as usual, was on the lookout for him. He held up a little box, and Lizzie hurried down the street to meet him. They stopped, and right on the street Harry took a plain ring out of the box and put it on the third finger of Lizzie's left hand.

We women talked that over and decided that it did not mean anything. It would mean something to a "nice" girl, but what could it mean to one like Lizzie?

Lizzie evidently thought it meant something. She would sit on her front porch, turning that ring around and around on her finger. Then she would



take it off, and read something on the inside. Did Harry intend to marry Lizzie?

Our tongues rolled over this new subject for speculation. But it ceased to be merely speculation. For old Mrs. Althouse told the baker's delivery man that her Lizzie and her Lizzie's Harry were going to be married soon. They were going "away, away off, out West, away from everybody and everything!" The baker's delivery man was incredulous. He reported that he had said, in reply to Mom Althouse:

"He's stringing her. Who's going to marry a bad egg like your Lizzie?"

To which, he reported, Mom Althouse had returned:

"Lizzie's no bad egg. She used to be, but not no more. She's good now, and real straight. She's as good as anybody. She's a nice girl now, and very particular how she acts. Lizzie's learning to cook, too! She's in the kitchen right now, shelling peas!"

The baker's delivery man expressed his skepticism. So Mom Althouse led him around back of the house, where, through a window, he saw Lizzie shelling peas.

But Harry did not appear to be stringing Lizzie. It was Harry who told the butcher that he and "Lucille" were to be married in three days.

The butcher had greatly desired to laugh at the mention of "Lucille" and the idea of her marrying. He told us that he had thought of a number of good jokes that he might make on the subject, <sup>ing</sup> but Harry was very large. His fist <sup>amp</sup> looked awful powerful. A person couldn't tell how he would take a joke. Beside the Althouses were good customers. And in business, a person had to be careful not to offend a good customer.

So the butcher kept his laughs, his sneers and his jokes to himself—till Harry had gone.

Some of us women felt very bitter about the whole business. If a bad girl like Lizzie Althouse could get married, and have a chance to be respectable and happy, then what was the use

of being good? It ought not to be allowed. Lizzie should have been compelled to stay in the Tenderloin, and let some nice girl have the handsome blond Harry.

The day Harry had set was an ideal one for a wedding. It was warm and sunny. Every woman on the block was on duty from seven o'clock in the morning. Beds were unmade, dishes unwashed, babies unbathed. We women could scarcely contain ourselves.

The hours dragged by, marked by unwonted stillness in the Althouse home. The woman who lived on the corner opposite the Althouses was detailed to keep watch, in case the couple could sneak out the back way. But they had no such plans. For, at about half past eleven, Mom Althouse appeared first, with her customary imbecile grin. Then the younger Althouse girl ran out in a clean dress. Then came Harry and Lizzie. Harry had on a grey suit, a new hat, and new shoes. He looked absurdly happy.

And Lizzie?

Her auburn hair was free from curls. She had drawn it down smoothly over her ears and into a big knot at her neck. The graceful lines of her neck and chin showed beautifully. Her face was made up perfectly. She wore a wistaria colored suit, and a very bridey hat of white Leghorn, covered with dainty lilacs. Harry pulled her gloved hand through his arm, and they walked down the block and around a couple of corners to the Methodist parsonage.

I wonder if ever a girl had such a queer wedding procession! There we women stood, each on her own steps, and each trying to put into face and attitude her disapproval. The very air was heavy with that malicious feeling we held toward a woman we could not understand.

But it was all wasted.

Lizzie Althouse and her Harry had eyes and thoughts only for each other. We could not reach them, through that cloud of happiness. We women knew that we had failed in our last effort to hurt Lizzie.



# The Changeling

*By Johnstone Blair*

**L**ITTLE SISTER was not bright. She could not learn to talk. She could not even understand what you said to her. The brittle sounds of English were discordant in her ears. She could never learn anything. Her father, who was a very wise doctor and wrote learned books about hereinbefore-notwithstanding, was ashamed to have bred her. Her mother was ashamed to have borne her. She was not bright.

I was sorry for Little Sister; for she was beautiful. She was five years old and as dainty as an elf. Her face was rose-pink and delicate, her hair gorgeously golden and curly. But it was plain that Little Sister would never learn anything. She could not even learn to talk. They did not say she was a half-wit: they said she was not bright. I believed them then.

But one day in April I saw one of the prettiest pictures I have ever seen and I learned that they were wrong.

It was on a roadside—Little Sister and I lived in a town in the West—

and it was full spring in that country. I was walking with my head full of great books—books as ridiculous, perhaps, as hereinbefore-notwithstandings, but pleasanter pastime—and I looked up with surprise to see Little Sister across the way, wandering happily nearly a mile from her home.

It was an April evening. There was an April air blowing the grasses. Little Sister, with wind-blown hair, was between my eyes and the sunset. She was walking elfinly against a background of swaying grasses and daisies and cowslips and the evening sky. She was bare-headed. The breeze blew her curls behind her. Her small dress flapped and rustled about her knees. Her head was tilted, her cheeks were flushed, her eyes were bright with happiness and laughter. She held out her hands somehow as if she were strewing things to the flowers. She was drinking in the April breeze and the scent of daisies as if it were heady wine.

And she was talking to herself.



**T**HE way to be happy is to keep one's brain in the ice-box and one's heart in the good, warm sun.



**T**HE image of a girl's first love is engraved indelibly on her heart. After that she uses a rubber stamp.





# Freedom

*By Max Robin*

## I

TO tell you the truth, I liked my friend Bob Edwards, even more than he liked me, Jim Fitzpatrick.

Don't get frightened at our names—to begin with. They were not ours. We assumed them because they were more easy to pronounce than our own and because they sounded more American.

I'll tell you why I liked my friend. Anybody would have liked him, and so will you—I suppose. He had a stiff, rugged character. He was a man with an iron will. He was what you call a human dynamo. And if he had fallen into proper hands his energy and inspiration would have been turned to good use.

As it was, he was my inspiration, as well as his own. There was not a trace of weakness in Bob's character. You would never see him yawn, worry, lie about idle or do anything of the kind. He was a live wire every minute of his life—restless and untiring. He had a great passion for creating or doing something.

I tramped with him all over North America. We were in Canada, Florida, New Mexico, Kentucky, Arizona—everywhere in this part of the continent. We had sailed the full length of the Mississippi. When we once came to New Orleans we had a mind of going into Mexico and South America, but changed our minds.

We went through a lot during those years. We did every kind of work imaginable under the sun. Our spirit lies scattered over the length and breadth of those places we had passed.

Everywhere we left something. For always we had in mind to do and live.

I don't know why we did all that. I don't know what great charm possessed us. I know only that we had a great thirst for doing things. Always something seemed to call us, and we went and laboured and left and worked again. There was no end. Our red blood boiled. Our young hearts throbbed with enthusiasm and we were busy living.

We had worked as lumberjacks, ice-breakers, miners, sailors, snow-shovelers, life-savers, stone-breakers, wood-choppers and blacksmiths. Always we picked the harder job, the one that was in the open and required muscle rather than brain. We belonged to nature. We were free men, and we wished to knock about as much as possible and do as many things as we pleased.

We once had a job smashing stones, which we did outside during winter under a temperature of sixteen below zero. A wind blew hard at our ears. The trees groaned over us. A cold sun stared down, and all around us the earth glared with frost. We were the only two to work that day. The rest of the gang had stayed home. But we came, and stuck through a day of nine and a half hours.

And do you know why we did it? Why, simply because we were healthy and loved life—because our bodies demanded it. We worked, and our faces smiled. Our hearts laughed. We had met the challenge of nature. We had met the challenge of men. And we had defied them all. We had beaten them all.



It was the song of our bodies, the song of clean, free, healthy men. We sweated, and the wind froze our sweat; but with the same enthusiasm, with the same joy we kept up, and when the time to quit came we felt that we had stood the task like men.

Once as we worked half-naked on board the *Madagascar* under a hot southern sun, all our muscles bent on the job, there started trouble between Bobby Edwards and a tall, fearless Irish sailor, whom many thought wise to avoid. Bobby came up to me smiling, his face burning with wrath, and said, "Watch now for a free show."

My heart was thrilled and I knew that something was coming and that it would be worth while. I saw Bobby come up and without uttering a word land a full right into the other's face. I saw the big Irishman go down like a log. I saw the eager expression on Bob's face. And together, Bob and I, felt the pride, the joy, the rough, all-surpassing majesty of youth.

Bob was impatient and quick. He did not like to be held too long at a task.

"Take it easy and be done with it," was what he used to say. But once in a fight I saw Bobby meet the resistance of his lifetime. It was between him and a plain short nigger. Bob had had no time to begin, when the other was over at his legs, and down went Bob toppling over the little man's body. He was up again in a fury. I had never seen him like that. It seemed he would crush his opponent. He darted forward, but quick as lightning the nigger dodged, turned somehow, and again had him on the floor. Bob was up again.

A group of sailors had formed. The black little devil, smiling, stood waiting for him. I saw Bob advance. But he no longer tried to strike. He seized the nigger in his hands, lifted him up in the air and threw him overboard. But his anger was not appeased. He left us, went to his bunk, and for fully fifteen minutes sat there, breathing hard and not saying a word to any of us. He had lost the fight. He frankly admitted

that. But not for the life of him could he tell why.

Days and weeks would go by when we would be too lazy to work. We would sit near the seashore and watch the waves roll to us from afar. It would be quiet around, except for the palm trees murmuring and the vast ocean gasping and sighing and rolling incessantly. I'll tell you, it was good music for the ear, soft and soothing. It would recall to me the lines I had met somewhere:

*"Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea . . ."*

Well, Bob and I were in Miami, Florida. The place is one of the most enchanting in America, and we decided to stay there for a while. We had money, but preferred to live out of town. We bought some canvas, a teakettle, cups, a mandolin and some provisions, and in a day we were fixed in a regular tent.

That was a great month we spent then. There are no stories in life, I tell you. You do things, you live, and you don't even notice how you do it. You are too busy to look at yourself. But there in Miami, under those blue skies, in that balmy climate, life was story-like, as in a dream.

We were absolutely free men—strong and free. But it was a freedom which we well deserved. We had done our work—and now the vacation.

We would get up early in the morning, then lie for a while and talk. Next we would put on our bathing suits and run to the beach for a swim. You never tried it, so you don't know what it means. But I assure you that if you did it once in Miami you would never feel like leaving—but if you did, you would remember it for the rest of your life.

Bob and I were fine swimmers, and for fully an hour we would fight and struggle with the waves. Then, happy and smiling, we would run out to dry on the shore. After that we had breakfast near our tent. Through with that,



we dressed up and went to town. We visited the library, read eagerly from some books and magazines—for after all Bob and I were intelligent fellows, with a genuine thirst for knowledge—and went out, relieved and enlightened, for a walk through Miami.

I am sure that many people envied us as we strolled leisurely over the clean, beautiful streets. We went about and laughed. Any wonder? No worries, no cares, no responsibilities, no ties—young, free, happy and gay. We had everything at our disposal. Indeed, life was too good, and invigorated by the air, fresh as the day itself, we walked about and cracked jokes and laughed and talked—all to our hearts' desire.

I suppose we were the two healthiest chaps in town and we caught some of the girls' fancies. By two we were really infatuated and we treated them daily to the movies. Bob had his and I mine. Poor girls! Foolish girls! They asked no questions. We were strangers to them, but our whereabouts did not concern them and they entrusted themselves unprotectedly to us. But we were honest fellows and we never wronged them.

A kiss, a hug—well, that didn't matter. For as we stayed on we really began to love our girls. Mine was Florence, a pretty American blonde, and his Norma, a dark-haired little girl of Italian descent. We carried on wonderfully with them, for Miami is an ideal place for love, with eternal spring weather, natural gardens, clear skies and balmy breezes from the big warm Atlantic.

Those girls turned to be an inspiration for us and we dreamt of them constantly. We would not speak to one another about our affairs, no. We just kept quiet. But each of us knew that the other was in love, and that filled our hearts with happiness.

Finally we felt that if we stayed a little longer we would have to marry them and stay there for good. It was not a bad place to live in, but we were not yet ready to settle down. Our hearts still carried us farther and farther

away—and we were bound to go. But those girls too had got a fair hold on us and we were in a dilemma. Nevertheless we stayed and loved and lived and laughed.

The afternoons around the seashore were glorious beyond description. We liked to take a canoe and go far out upon the ocean. It felt dandy to be rocked by the waves, just as the sun was setting and the sky was a living picture of yellow and blue. Later it would turn light-blue, and the whole city, with its distant swaying palms and white houses, would sink into the shadow—like a fantastic dream in fairyland.

Bob and I would sit near our tent and eat. We always ate light things at night. Everything around us was so wholesome and clean, we too could not help keeping likewise. We would look into the dim space and think. Of a sudden our hearts and minds would get cleared and we would feel as light as birds in midair.

Bob would take out his pipe. He would smoke only on such solemn occasions. Sometimes he would leave me and disappear somewhere in the darkness, and I would sit and watch alone. He would come later with the girls, and together we would sit till midnight, only laughing, only joking. The only time we felt sad was when Bob began to play on his mandolin. We would all sit breathless, gazing into the impenetrable space.

As I think of those nights, Bob's music, our wonderful girls, a great longing fills my heart. I feel like going back there, but that I know is impossible.

And it was Bob who brought a sudden end to it all. It happened on a particularly magnificent afternoon, as we lay in our usual way near the sea.

Bob had been quiet for quite a while. He had his back turned to me and I was watching his powerful muscular body lying motionless and inert. I remember he was dressed in a blue shirt, gray trousers and tan slippers.

"Say, Jim," he said, suddenly, lifting



only his head, "what would you think of leaving this place?"

"What for?" I asked.

"Well, it's no use idling around here. Don't you think we had better be doing something?" He turned with his face toward me as he said this. "Why, there are lots of things we could do in the world, and now is the time. We are killing time here and may be sorry for it later."

His face bore an undecided expression, and it seemed he was still weighing the matter over in his mind.

To tell the truth, I had expected some such say-out from Bob. For several days previous to that I had seen him go around in a way suggesting to me that he was dissatisfied with something. And now that he had spoken, I felt that he was right, but was afraid to admit it even to myself.

"You are talking nonsense," I rejoined after a brief pause. "What is it that you have suddenly found to do? You are still fooling yourself. You still believe that there and not here lies your happiness. I have learned this much, Bob, that the world is in its old place and nothing on earth has changed."

"Yes, but I have changed," he retorted slowly. "You do not require the world to change. You grow, and then everything changes in your eyes. And now I think that we have had about enough of this life. You know, too much freedom is no good. You have got to give something in return for it. And we have given nothing so far. I doubt if we can afford to continue like this. People are working. Big things are happening. There is work for all of us, and we have no right to bum. We must take part in this big game and do something that is really visible and constructive."

"Well, I see that you have begun to worry about society," I said.

"Maybe, Jim," Bob replied.

"But how long do you expect to last?" I asked. "I know that you are here because you have revolted against that common every-day life at which you must make good and stick. And

we have made a pretty fair exchange. Don't forget that there is nothing more important, nothing greater or more sublime in life than the irrepressible clean cravings of your soul, and to go back means to crush those cravings and everything else you hold dear."

Bob sat up.

"Yes, I know all this," he said impatiently, "but you must force yourself to do it. People have made greater sacrifices. I have not turned altruistic all of a sudden. I realize only that you have got to do a good day's work before you can be a poet and call yourself free. We are too good to do nothing—that's plain. We will work with a definite aim in mind, and then feel that we have a right and a cause for which to live. Sooner or later a man comes to think that way, and I think it better for us to do it right now."

Bob won the argument. We had chosen the open road because our thoughts flew high and we considered ourselves free men. We had looked upon great men and them we envied, but because there was no way for us to beat them, we had given up. But now we were coming back. We stopped thinking about those men on top. Every man can do his share and feel proud of himself. Every man can control his emotions and tell his poetic soul to wait till he is through with his job. It is easy. It only pays to try. And the real man succeeds and is never sorry.

## II

It was a short time ago that I spoke to my friend Bob about this come-back. He smiled, but I am sure that his blood boiled. His face expressed challenge and defiance.

"Energy might be turned into various channels of usefulness," he said; "anything you do is better than doing nothing. I dare any man to be in my way. One of these days I am going to fight Dempsey."

We both laughed. That old daring free spirit was still throbbing in our veins.



But now it is Spring again, and I doubt whether we shall be able to withstand the mighty call of the great open road. It is good to be busy. We are working over fifteen hours a day—and we are happy. But the road is calling. Our bodies have suddenly awakened to a million irrepressible desires. The love for adventure is here again. A soul that has once known freedom will never stay enslaved. And with these fresh breezes blowing from those faraway

naked hills that we once climbed, from those distant never-ending plains and fields, from those singing rivers and ever-roaring seas, we shall not hold out very long. Some day, and very soon too, we shall put on our old clothes and with a song of joy start out on the old trail. We are sorry to lose even one moonlit night, one day of bright yellow sunshine. To dream and write about it is not enough. We have got to go and live.



## Sentimentale

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

LIKE a suspended chord, the lilac sky  
 Haunts with a faintly sentimental tune  
 These aisles of twilight, where the shadows lie  
 Unbroken of the meditative moon.  
*Tempo rubato!* The remembered song  
 Dies out among the stars, and I recall  
 The pulse-beat in her lifted throat, the long,  
 Low peal of lyric laughter ending all!

Moon of my troubled night, lest I should sleep  
 And touch the keys to this unfinished theme—  
 Lest I should sleep, and traitorously dream—  
 Strike from my heart this music! Let me keep  
 Only the golden words her gay lips flung  
 Into the hush that holds them now, unsung!



IT takes two to make a marriage. One is a girl who knows what she is about.  
 The other is a mother who knows how to coach her.



A HUSBAND is simply a lover with a two days' growth of beard, his collar off, and a bad cold in the head.





# Le Précieux Fardeau

*By Florian-Parmentier*

**P**AUL GERBEAU aimait mystifier ses amis. Ses amis, le sachant, ne s'y laissaient plus prendre. Mais, comme c'était un excellent homme, plus maniaque en somme que rusé, ils jouaient quelquefois les dupes pour lui faire plaisir.

Cet été-là, Gerbeau passait ses vacances dans les Vosges avec Fouquet, un ancien camarade de régiment, et Davel, un vieil ami de collège. Les trois compagnons avaient choisi, comme centre de leurs opérations, Gérardmer. De là, ils se proposaient de rayonner, d'un côté, sur tout le pays qu'arrose la Vologne, de l'autre, sur la vallée de Munster.

Le lendemain même de leur arrivée fut consacré à une ascension sur la Schlucht.

Aujourd'hui, comme chacun sait, les ascensions se font commodément assis dans un tramway funiculaire. Nos touristes prirent donc le tramway, non sans s'être, au préalable, attaché chacun un sac dans le dos, pour se donner "de l'allure."

Sur le parcours, les sites pittoresques, les torrents, les cascades ne manquaient pas; en sorte qu'ils arrivèrent sans ennui au bout du voyage.

Ils prirent le parti, parvenus à peu près au sommet, de suivre à pied la route de la Schlucht jusqu'au relai de la diligence, afin de jouir du splendide panorama qui se déroule sur la vallée des lacs de Longemer et de Retourner.

En passant sous la Roche du Diable, Fouquet et Davel remarquèrent que Gerbeau détachait un fragment du rocher et le mettait dans sa poche.

—Ce sera un souvenir, dit-il. Je collerai, sur cette pierre, une étiquette avec la provenance et la date.

Ses compagnons firent un geste d'indifférence et reprirent leur marche. Gerbeau continua:

—J'ai des pierres de tous les pays par lesquels je suis passé. Aussi, je me flatte d'avoir d'assez appréciables connaissances en lithologie. J'ai du silex, du basalte, de l'ardoise, du feldspath, du spath, du porphyre, différentes sortes de marbre, des stalagmites, des galets, des fossiles. . . . J'ai même un aérolithe!

—Alors, tu collectionnes, fit Fouquet.

—Eh oui, comme tu vois.

—C'est une idée intéressante, assura Davel. Et ton aréolithe, s'il est authentique. . . .

—Tout ce qu'il y a de plus authentique, mon cher. Je l'ai vu tomber à mes pieds!

L'effet fut foudroyant, car Fouquet et Davel, à leur tour, laissèrent tomber . . . la conversation.

Le soleil commençait à devenir ardent. Les voyageurs furent heureux de prendre place dans l'omnibus. Ils arrivèrent ainsi, après avoir passé près des sources de la Meurthe, à un hôtel à cheval sur la frontière,—comme les gendarmes allemands sur la consigne.

Après un bon repas, ils reprirent leur route, pour se rendre au Hoheneck,—à 1365 mètres d'altitude! Le pays devenait de plus en plus pittoresque. Ils avaient maintenant de profonds ravins à leur droite, des cimes escarpées à leur gauche.

Au tunnel de Munster,—une énorme roche perforée, comme la Roche du



Diab!e,—Gerbeau voulut encore emporter un morceau du granit.

—Il faudrait les étiqueter tout de suite, pour ne pas les confondre plus tard, fit remarquer Fouquet, qui souriait dans sa barbe.

Le collectionneur marqua, en effet, ses pierres de traits de crayon.

—Vous devriez faire comme moi, dit-il à ses amis. Si vous saviez avec quel plaisir on se rappelle les étapes de ses voyages en regardant ces simples cailloux.

—Les cailloux du Petit Poucet, observa Davel.

—J'aime mieux me les rappeler à l'aide de cartes postales, répondit Fouquet.

—Pour moi, reprit Davel, je ne m'embarrasserais de souvenirs qui pèsent à ce point que si je trouvais quelque chose de rare . . . un aréolithe par exemple ou du pétunzé.

—Du pétunzé? Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça? interrogea Gerbeau.

—C'est une pierre extrêmement rare, et fort recherchée des potiers d'art, parce que, travaillée, elle imite à s'y méprendre la porcelaine de Chine. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas absolument impossible d'en rencontrer ici, car le peu que nous avons en France se trouve précisément dans les Vosges.

—Diantre! fit Gerbeau, tu es calé, toi!

—Oui, mon cher; mais je ne m'en vante pas.

On arrivait à l'endroit où il faut quitter la route de Munster et choisir soit le sentier français, soit la route carrossable alsacienne.

—Qu'en dites-vous, mes amis? demanda Gerbeau. Le sentier? la route?

—Le sentier! dirent ensemble Fouquet et Davel.

On s'engagea donc, par un étroit chemin rocailleux, à travers des éventrements de roche et de brusques ressauts de terrain. La chaleur était de plus en plus torride. Les trois voyageurs marchaient silencieusement, en écoutant se répercuter l'appel plaintif des pâtres dans la montagne.

Tout à coup, Davel, qui marchait en avant, s'arrêta en poussant des cris de joie.

Gerbeau et Fouquet s'étaient approchés.

—De pétunzé! leur dit-il, en montrant une sorte de granit léproisé de large taches blanches. Du pétunzé!

—Tu es sûr? demanda Gerbeau.

—Sûr et *certain* répondit-il: d'un air aussi ravi que s'il venait de découvrir un trésor.

Et, débouclant les épaulières de son sac, il prit un solide couteau et se mit à gratter la terre, pour déterrer l'une des moraines. Presque aussitôt Fouquet l'imita, avec une ardeur qui surprit un peu Gerbeau.

—Mais, enfin, me direz-vous ce que vous avez l'intention de faire de cette pierre?

—Pas de la mettre dans ta collection, bien sûr! gouailla Fouquet.

—Tu n'as pas l'air de te douter, fit Davel en haussant les épaules, qu'un bloc de pétunzé comme celui que je vais mettre dans mon sac peut se vendre deux ou trois cents francs!

—Deux ou trois cents francs! Fichtre! s'écria Gerbeau.

Et il se mit à gratter le sol à son tour.

Quand les trois amis se furent chargés chacun d'un gros morceau de roche, ils reprirent leur route d'un pas moins assuré, baissant l'échine sous les traits implacables d'un soleil incandescent.

Il y avait à peine dix minutes qu'ils marchaient de la sorte que Gerbeau, ruisselant de sueur, s'arrêtait pour s'éponger le front.

—C'est égal, dit-il; je n'aurai pas volé mes trois cents francs, quand j'arriverai à l'hôtel!

—Tu y penses déjà? fit Davel. Tu n'es pas au bout de tes peines, alors.

Arrivés à l'écho d'Auslicht, nos voyageurs regagnèrent, par les Trois-Chaumes, la route carrossable, afin d'atteindre plus aisément la cime du Hohe-neck avec leur fardeau.

La chaleur leur paraissait devenue



tropicale, lestés comme ils l'étaient à présent. Gerbeau, qui avait un commencement d'asthme, souffrait beaucoup plus encore que ses compagnons. Et il répétait sans cesse, en soufflant bruyamment :

—C'est égal, j'ai déjà gagné mes trois cents francs !

Une fois, il ajouta, avec un regard d'admiration pour chacun de ses deux amis :

—Mais, ma parole, on dirait que plus vous avancez, moins vous êtes fatigués, vous autres !

—Dame ! c'est l'entraînement, répondit Fouquet.

Depuis quelque temps, Gerbeau songeait à se débarrasser de sa charge ; mais il n'osait exprimer son idée tout haut.

A quelques centaines de mètres du sommet, il se décida à consulter Davel.

—Comme tu voudras, lui dit celui-ci. Mais nous voilà presque arrivés. Pour redescendre, tu seras poussé par ton sac, et tu n'en mancheras que plus vite.

Parvenus enfin au haut du Hohe-neck, Fouquet et Davel se mirent à consulter la table d'orientation pour reconnaître les points qu'ils apercevaient dans le recul de l'horizon.

Mais Gerbeau avait hâte d'entrer à la buvette et de se désaltérer. Il était en nage. Il était fourbu. La perspective d'une bonne heure de répit devant un large bock le séduisait davantage,

en ce moment, que tous les panoramas du monde.

Quand il eut pris assez de repos pour se sentir la force de penser, il fut soudain visité par une idée qui le fit sourire.

Les trois touristes avaient déposé leurs bagages contre la paroi de planches, à l'extérieur de la buvette. Gerbeau sortit, ouvrit son sac, en tira le bloc de pierre, et déboucla le sac de Fouquet, dans l'intention de le charger d'un double fardeau. Mais il ne fut pas peu surpris en trouvant ce sac vide. Il ouvrit alors celui de Davel et le trouva vide également.

—Nous sommes volés ! s'écria-t-il, en rentrant précipitamment dans la buvette.

—Volés ? firent ses amis, qui avaient compris.

—Mais oui : nous avons laissé nos sacs dehors, et le pétunzé, le précieux pétunzé n'y est plus.

Fouquet éclata de rire.

Mais Davel, imperturbable, demanda :

—Tu n'as plus le tien ?

—Mais si.

—Ah ! . . . C'est que, vois-tu, j'aurais te donner le conseil de ne pas trop t'en désoler. Fouquet et moi, nous nous sommes dit depuis longtemps que nous n'étions pas au Japon, et que, décidément, cette pierre ne pouvait être du pétunzé ! . . .



A MAN spends half of his life accumulating enough money to get married, and the other half accumulating enough troubles to be glad to die.



THE sweetest kiss is the one that one hoped for, but didn't quite expect.





# One Man's Opinion

*By George Jean Nathan*

## I

"PADDY, The Next Best Thing," a dramatization of a novel by Gertrude Page, blows up with a deafening report at quarter of nine when the audience, upon hearing the hero say to the entering heroine, "You are a little witch; you remind me of a butterfly," happens to glance down and observe that the elf thus addressed has legs and ankles like Big Bill Hefflefinger's. It is essential that an ingénue have ingenuous limbs. The best dramatic writing in the world cannot melt an audience into the mood of regarding a young heroine as a fragile piece of Sèvres or a sunlit cobweb if the young lady has a pair of ankles like chianti bottles. The play is a slice of unredeemed hack work of the "Peg o' My Heart" cut that has enjoyed a considerable vogue in London. It is the sort of thing in which the heroine interprets cuteness periodically by pulling up a stocking that is in the constant act of falling down and by brushing the hair back from the eyes with an impetuous flourish. It is, further, the sort of exhibit in which the playwrights are compelled to exercise a perspiring strength to keep apart until closing time two lovers who, if given the rein of plausibility, would be affectionately licking each other's lips before the first act was half done. The acting is of a low order.

Ian Hay's comedy "Happy-Go-Lucky" (*née* "Tilly of Bloomsbury"), though of considerably smoother

flavour than the Page brew, has a similar tussle for plausibility with the lady selected to play its central ingénue rôle. This rôle is that of a fetching flapper in the 'teens. Duly deliberating upon this circumstance, the manager has relevantly hired for the rôle an estimable English actress of superior years with mature mien and the air of being a settled, contented and affectionate wife and mother. What proceeds in the scenes in which this post-*ingénue* figures is therefore obviously burlesque. It is of course true that Miss Laurette Taylor, the dignified mother of two full-grown children, can still create the illusion of flighty young girlhood with a very remarkable magic, but there are few Miss Taylors. The Hay comedy is a collection of several fairly well-drawn characters and several very broad caricatures set down in the midst of a stereotyped theatrical fable. Its amusing moments are overshadowed by its quarter-hours of banality. The affair as a whole is cut No. 2 from the "Peg o' My Heart" joint.

## II

"THE BAT," by Mary Roberts Rinehart and Avery Hopwood, is an expert and interesting tournament in popular theater values. The morning after the opening of the piece, the newspaper reviews announced with an incontrovertible emphasis that it was (1) too crowded with melodramatic incident, (2) too close to burlesque, (3) too lacking in credi-



bility, and (4) too insistently fictitious to hold the rapt attention of an audience. The next night, accordingly, the line at the box-office window reached to the sewer at the corner of Broadway and Forty-fifth Street. The very attributes held by the Rialto umpires to be inimical to the success of the play are wholly responsible for its success, as the authors—both exceptionally shrewd manipulators of the popular emotions—doubtless well appreciate. No mystery play, provided only it be manufactured with a fair dash of skill, can be too absurd for the popular palate. "The Thirteenth Chair," a straight melodrama, was not less incredible than "Officer 666," a melodramatic farce; and yet it was equally successful. The notion that the public will watch with close attention a melodramatic farce like the latter, simply because it is admitted to be a farce, but will not watch with the same close attention a somewhat straighter melodrama like "The Bat," because it is not announced as an out-and-out farce, is something like the notion that the public would not have been thrilled as much as it actually was by a play like "Arsène Lupin" if that play had been designated a farce (which it was) instead of a straight melodrama (which, despite the designation, it assuredly was not). The incredible melodrama generally makes very much more money in the theater than the more reasonable melodrama. "Within the Law," an enormous money-maker, was completely without conviction in its three biggest scenes. Not even the mind of a policeman could have been bamboozled by these scenes. "The Thirteenth Chair," another success, was absurdity even to a moron, yet consistently holding. Such greatly more plausible melodramas as "The Knife" and "The Assassin" of Eugene Walter, on the other hand, were failures. And this despite the fact that they were more dexterous pieces of dramatic writing than ei-

ther of the other melodramas. The theory that the theater must be plausible to pay is the theory that plausibility is inevitably a better circus than a boozy and idiotic fancy.

"The Bat" is a highly talented yokel shillaber. Its comedy is the worst that even Broadway has heard in several seasons, but its melodrama is Maurice Leblanc with twice Leblanc's expertness. Miss May Vokes, perhaps the most awful comedienne that the American stage knows; Harrison Hunter, shrewdly cast; Miss Effie Ellsler, miscast, and Edward Ellis, a competent actor who is generally wasted, are in the presenting company.

### III

"IMMODEST Violet," by David Carb, unveiled at a special matinée performance, shows nothing. The great talents of this M. Carb, a product of the Harvard Bakerbräu, have been confided to me from time to time by various persons. This is the first play of the rising young genius' that I have read or seen. It is trash.

### IV

I AM never able to think of anything to say about the plays of Mr. George Scarborough. They are usually the sort of plays that, were they magazine manuscripts, would be criticized merely with rejection slips. It is not that they do not proceed from an occasionally serviceable idea; it is not that Scarborough doesn't occasionally hit upon the figure of a potentially engaging character; it is that he lacks almost totally a cultivated point of view and the writing ability to project it. His point of view, in every one of the plays that he has written, is that of a sentimentally indignant prep school boy; his writing mere journalism. He gives one the impression that, once he is seized with his idea for a play, he promptly steams himself up with much black coffee, locks all the doors,



enthusiastically rips off his chemise, and goes at the job of completing the manuscript as if it were a prairie fire and he a locomotive engineer. There is no repose, no deliberation, no editing, no reflection. The very manuscript is flushed and breathless, even in its placid moments. Scarborough's latest is called "Blue Bonnet," which sufficiently describes it. He asks us to believe that the Rio Grande countryside, at the time of the Mexican border troubles, would have been morally outraged and shocked by the suspicion that an unmarried young man and young woman were living together. Ernest Truex and Miss Mona Thomas are the leading performers. The former is a widely eulogized actor not without a very small measure of the staggering virtuosity credited to him. The latter is the rubber-stamp Broadway ingénue.

## V

THE charm of the theater, from the standpoint of the professional critic, is the charm of surprise. For four weeks—eight weeks—his noddle may be paralyzed by a procession of mule opera like "Paddy, The Next Best Thing," "The Cave Girl" and "The Checkerboard" when—presto!—there suddenly crosses his vision something that he has approached with the old, chronic misgiving and that unexpectedly turns out to be jouncey stuff. It was thus I approached "The Bad Man," by Porter Emerson Browne (with Holbrook Blinn announced as the star!), and it was thus I found myself jolted. Walking reluctantly to the theater, I recalled this Browne as the author of such theatrical jake-prickers as "A Fool There Was" and "The Spendthrift," and a long series of bellicose and very idiotic wartime magazine articles peremptorily and sternly calling the attention of the United States Government to the fact that dangerous enemy aliens like Emil Liederkrantz, the Hoboken pants presser, and Gustav Wurtz, the Bronx

delicatessen dealer, were being permitted to roam the city at large and nightly attend, unmolested and unhindered, the movies of Mabel Normand. And I also recalled that this Blinn, the star mime, was a member of what John Barrymore has dubbed the elbow school of acting; that, save for a single deft performance in a one-act comedy by George Ade, his work in the last eight or nine years had been a thing of absurd struttings and gruntings; that he was, in short, a species of serio-comic King Lear. I entered the door.

The curtain was hoisted. I beheld the rubber-stamp hero, hair plastered down, flannel shirt with sleeves rolled up, riding boots, pipe; the rubber-stamp heroine, tossing hair, riding habit; the rubber-stamp husband villain, city clothes, cigarette, sneer; the rubber-stamp gabble anent the love suffered in silence and the mortgage that would be foreclosed by night unless the money were forthcoming. Thus passed ten minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour, and came the curtain of the first act with the momentary entrance of M. Blinn, elbow and all, figged out like the label on a box of José Vila cigars. . . . I went out for a smoke, and meditated ironically upon a man of my forty years giving himself night in and night out to such twattle. . . . I entered the door again.

The curtain was hoisted. The same group of marionettes was visible. The M. Blinn, grand to the point of elegance, with elbow akimbo, held the center of the stage. I sank into my chair. When—*passee-passee!*—something happened. The character of the Blinn suddenly took life. A fresh, green point of view began to permeate the traffic. Wit and humour, a good old middle-thumping humour, began to fly. A sophisticated, droll and fetching attitude began to shoot colours over and around the boards. There came gleams of observation, of sardonic waggery, of satire even. The old



hard mouth lines began to relax. I smiled. I grinned. I chuckled. I let out a bull roar. And so, save for a fifteen minute return to the banalities of the first act, it and I continued. Browne, the venerable platitude huckster and indignant soap-box patriot, the author of dramas screaming "Out of my house, you harlot, you are my wife no longer!", the magazine Jeanne d'Arc of Prohibition, Baseball-less Sundays, the Sanctity of The Czecho-Slovakian Boundary, the Mann Act, and What Not—could this be the same Browne? And Blinn, the pantaloon *maniéré*, could this fellow with the suave humour, the droll gesture, the beautifully amusing swagger, the sure and excellent comic method—could this be the same Blinn? . . . The theater, I mused, is a jolly place—just the place for a man of forty years.

The play is, in essence, a crude but uncommonly diverting Americanization of the customarily omitted Sierra Nevada third act of "Man and Superman," with Mendoza converted into a Mexican brigand. This latter character is the mouthpiece of the playwright and the sieve for his entertainingly derisory commentary on the superiority of Mexican outlawry to American law. It is good fooling with an undertow of sharp railery at the current uplift, flag-wagging and kindred nonsenses. And with all its lack of polish, occasional stagey trumpery and intermittent obvious writing, worth all the "Happy-Go-Luckys" brought over from England in the last ten years. James Devine, a hitherto unknown comique, contributes to the pleasure of the affair; and Fred Tiden does a first-rate melodramatic bit. William Harris, Jr., is the producer.

## VI

"CALL The Doctor," by Jean Archibald, is a seedy second cooking of A. E. Thomas' "What the Doctor Ordered" and Mapes' and Smith's

"The Boomerang," contrived without sauce or flavour. It reveals no wit, no originality, no writing skill, no imagination. The characters are culled vastly less from life than from *Life*, and one can hear in their speeches the clicking of a laboriously fingered typewriter. The exhibit, from first to last, is a grand conclave of theatrical rubber-stamps. The Belasco staging is relevantly old-fashioned: a compendium of hard and fast orange sunsets, navy blue nights and addresses to the fourth wall. Miss Janet Beecher is pleasant as the "doctor of domestic difficulties"; Miss Charlotte Walker, as the wife who fears that she is losing her husband, displays her habitual lack of subtlety; William Norris plays the philandering husband the way Harrison Hunter plays detectives; and Philip Merivale, as the lawyer-lover, wears a new dinner jacket.

## VII

I NOTE in *Who's Who*:

"Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., son of Florenz Ziegfeld, musical educator; graduate Leipzig Conservatory; studied music under Moscheles, Wenzel, Plaidy, Papperitz, Richter, David, etc.; founder and president Chicago Musical College; officer Legion d'Honneur."

That may explain it. That may explain why Ziegfeld  *fils*  is the superior of every other American music show producer. That may explain why the younger Ziegfeld's competitors, themselves the sons of tailors, dry-goods store owners and cloak and suit purveyors, somehow lack the feeling for beauty, the reach for colour and the inborn taste that are the portion of the man who has made "The Follies" and "The Frolics" the finest things of their kind in the native theater. For the offspring of a man who has loved music and devoted his life to it is more likely to be an englamourer of the stage than the offspring of a man who has loved blue serge and devoted his life



to converting it into tailored suits for women.

The superiority of Ziegfeld is once again made evident in the tenth of the series of his "Midnight Frolics," an entertainment whose rhythm, fluidity, lighting, loveliness and colour make quite absurd all rival efforts. Of the show in intimate detail I am unable to report, since the table assigned me afforded a somewhat more accurate view of the backs of the audience than of the stage. But from the glimpses of the latter that I was periodically able to get I come to the old conclusion: that this Ziegfeld knows his work better than any one else in his field. His very spotlights have a quality that the other spotlights seem to lack; his vaudeville acts are given an esoteric sense of refinement; and his girls have the same clean, fetching aspect that used to emphasize George Edwardes girls in the London Gaiety. There is little originality in this latest "Frolic," but there is a wealth of soft and undulating glow.

"The Greenwich Village Follies," on the other hand, is the usual thing: a vain groping to catch on to the curves of Ziegfeld's spitballs. It contains an amusing dance or two, and some attractive costumes, but where the Ziegfeld form is as of true poetry, the form here is as of amateurish vers libre. "Little Miss Charity" is a musical version of a farce failure of three years ago called "Not With My Money," and is another illustration of the managerial assumption that a bad farce may be converted into good entertainment by embellishing it with bad music. "Honeydew" has a score by Efrem Zimbalist that is far above the average, and a libretto that is weak in the knees. And "The Sweetheart Shop" has a libretto by Anne Caldwell, which news provides criticism automatically.

#### VIII

MR. D. W. GRIFFITH is generally ac-

cepted as the foremost producer of motion pictures, and as the greatest genius that they have in turn produced. His exhibits may therefore be accepted as the motion picture at its best and finest. Griffith's latest masterpiece is a picturization of the famous yokelwogger, "Way Down East," and is the result of many months of labour, the expenditure of large sums of money, great painstaking, and what has been heralded as its sponsor's talent at highest bloom. A view of the picture discloses it to be the same old fruitless whangdoodle, for the most part no better nor worse than the bulk of the movies one has seen in the past. It is a decided retrogression from the same producer's "Birth of a Nation" and, save for an excellently manoeuvred melodramatic ice floe episode at the finish, as uninventive and literal as the movies in the mass. A scene showing a great ball—"the most fashionable event of the season"—with all the guests arriving at the house simultaneously, and the device of flashing a quotation from the Scripture in old English letters, doubtless to make it seem more holy, are examples of the innocence of the thing. When Griffith took Thomas Dixon's yellow-back, "The Clansman," and made a motion picture out of it, he brought to the picture a suspicion of epic quality that the book lacked. He might have done something of the sort with this yellow-back play of Lottie Blair Parker by bringing into the picturization the background of New England bigotry and puritanism, undiminished down the years. He has done nothing of the kind. All that he has done is to make a mute popular melodrama muter still. The picture is without imagination, without eloquence, without beauty. It is a triumph of sentimental banality mounting with an accompaniment of kettle drums and sleigh-bells to an admirably staged cheap melodramatic sensation. If this is the cinema at its best, commend me to Billy Wat-



son's "Beef Trust." The film David Bartlett is Richard Barthelmess, an effective young screen actor; and the Anna Moore Miss Lillian Gish, an even more effective young screen actress. Mr. Griffith has on this occasion omitted the High Mass with which he has been wont to preface his screen masterpieces in the past. The lights go out and the film begins without the customary preliminary indulgence in punk sticks, dinner gongs, ecclesiastical tableaux, quotations from the Declaration of Independence and invocations of the Deity.

## IX

It is as sensible for George M. Cohan to go in for producing a play like "Genius and the Crowd" as it would be for me to go in for editing *The Ladies' Home Journal*. The estimable Giorgio's peculiar talents lie in a wholly different direction: it is a waste of those talents to dissipate them upon the sort of play that might be produced just as well—and with an equal futility—by any one of a half dozen other, and peculiarly talentless, managers. The exhibit in point, the work of John T. McIntyre and Francis Hill, is the conventional to-do with the musician who is beset by an obstreperous horde of worshipping females and who, after the conventional qualms and defeats, conventionally finds his true inspiration in his humble blonde secretary. Whatever the play in its original script, it presently faces its audience as a pallid paraphrase of "The Great Name" and plays of a piece on end: a soufflé of the benevolent old gray-wigged violinist, the down-at-the-heel tenor who quaveringly recalls the triumphs of the past to the accompaniment of "Céleste Aïda" (rendered "off" in a melancholious pianissimo), and the scene on the posy-strewn stage directly after the young musician's triumphant return to the concert platform. Such stuff

is not for the Cohan stage. That stage should continue to be devoted, as in the past, to Cohan's own inimitable reflections upon certain phases of American life and conduct, and to his highly amusing theatrical ingenuity. There are plenty of other men to produce the "Genius and the Crowds." There is only one George Cohan to write and produce the "Seven Keys to Baldpates" and "Wallingfords," and Broadway revues worth listening to.

## X

RIDA JOHNSON YOUNG'S "Little Old New York," a play of Manhattan in the early years of the last century, is a pale little gambol wherein, one after another, the oncoming actors are introduced to the audience as Washington Irving, Fitz Green Halleck, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Henry Brevoort, John Jacob Astor, Peter Delmonico, and so on. The impression is of the standard monkeyshine of the burlesque shows in which the actors on the stage shout that General Carranza is approaching and in which there then enters the Irish comedian. The fable is the familiar one of the young girl who masquerades as a boy in order to profit by the terms of a rich uncle's will. Unless handled with a high degree of skill, the love story proceeding from such a fable must inevitably carry with it an unpleasant sense of homosexuality. Miss Young writes with no adroitness, and her play proves flat stuff. Miss Genevieve Tobin, in the rôle of the girl-boy, is mildly agreeable. Ernest Glendinning, as the lover, expresses a wistfulness of heart by cocking his head to one side, gazing up at the balcony, and blinking his eyes. The lighting of the production (the work of Arthur Hopkins), and certain details in the staging of the first scene of the last act wherein a prize-fight is pictured, are admirable.



## XI

"THE Woman of Bronze," an adaptation by Paul Kester of a play by Henri Kistemaeker, the Franco-Belgian Hall Caine, is a Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle popularization of "La Gioconda." It is the species of French importation that would surely have been produced by Charles Frohman were he still alive. To the stereotyped triangle of famous sculptor, wife and other woman it brings the stereotyped Gallic alarms and excursions, with no novelty of speculation or philosophy, and no wit. This typical Gymnase thesis play permits of but two solutions, neither of which has interested me since 1900. See the first act, and you see the play.

When I glanced at my program before the curtain went up and observed that the Americanizer had named the very first character due to appear "Billy Byrd," I indulged my diaphragm in the usual adaptation grunt. The grunt was premature. Kester's adaptation is a very good job. And Miss Margaret Anglin contributes to it a very good performance. But the play is as out-of-date as a gold ear-pick.

## XII

BOOTH TARKINGTON's "Poldekin" begins with a first-rate comic idea and proceeds rapidly to talk that idea into a fourth-rate dramatic yokel yankee. The notion of a Russian Bolshevik who comes to America to blow up the whole works and ends by yelling enthusiastically for Babe Ruth, Luna Park and Bevo, contains material for another "Clarence," but Tarkington has elected to view it seriously and has thus lost an amusing quizzical comedy and gained a tiresome patriotic drama. The play sits around the stage on chairs facing the footlights and talks itself to death by the time the curtain falls on the

second of its four acts. It belongs to the Tarkington of "The Gibson Upright" (a sad, sad opus) and "Up From Nowhere" (another), rather than to the Tarkington who wrote the best light comedy of the last five American years. "Poldekin" is not without its flashes of good writing—Tarkington rarely does anything completely bad—but its general surface is dry and profitless. George Arliss plays the Bolshevik as if the character were Lawrence Grossmith.

## XIII

THOMAS DIXON's "A Man of the People" is a play with Abraham Lincoln as its pivot point, written as badly as the rest of the Rev. Dr.'s works. Previous to the lifting of the curtain I was handed a note from the Appleton Company telling me that at the end of the play the usher would present me gratis with a copy of the printed text, "without prejudice to what you may think about the play, one way or another." The Appleton Company was wrong. After reading their published version of the play, I find myself twice as much prejudiced against it as I would have been had I seen only the acted play. A deliberate reading of the text reveals its barrenness with deadly effect. Beside it, Drinkwater's "Lincoln" is a masterpiece.

## XIV

"WELCOME STRANGER" is diverting hokum by Aaron Hoffman, perhaps the most amusing fellow writing for the current Keith vaudeville stage. George Sidney is excellent in an Abe Potash role. "One," by Edward Knoblock, is lugubrious nonsense about two sisters with a single soul. It is ably staged by Belasco, and ably acted in its central role by Miss Frances Starr. "The Guest of Honor," by William Hodge, is the usual Hodge flapdoodle.



# Notes in the Margin

By H. L. Mencken

## I

### *The Literary Aspirant*

SOME time ago, being full of devilment, I issued a challenge to the neglected literary geniuses of the Republic, inviting them to send me their scorned masterpieces, and promising to read them all with attentive eye and to procure the instant publication, by some reputable publisher and on fair terms, of each and every one that showed the slightest solid merit. This challenge I printed in an eminent public journal, and it was reprinted, as I expected, by a great many other journals, including all of the little "literary" magazines that devote themselves to bad authors. The result was a tidal wave of manuscripts. They gushed upon me from all parts of the country, and I was weeks working my way through them. Finally I finished reading them—that is, all those that it was humanly possible to read at all—and cast up accounts. I found that, in the whole lot, there had been exactly one manuscript showing genuine sense and skill. It was, in fact, a very excellent piece of work, and the first publisher that I sent it to accepted it forthwith, as any other intelligent publisher would have done. But this lonesome exception, alas, did not quite meet my specifications, for it was surely not the work of a neglected genius. On the contrary, it was the work of a man who had already had one novel printed by a reputable house—a novel duly reviewed and praised at the time in this place, though I had forgotten the fact by the time I read the author's second. Thus the net yield of my quest:

that not a single sound manuscript by an author hitherto unpublished came to me—that I could not find a single author in the whole country who could offer reasonable proof that his or her genius had gone neglected by publishers.

This result, I need not say, did not surprise me. I am by profession a hunter-out of and helping-hand-giver to nascent literati, and my agents are as busy in the Greenwich Villages and on the Telegraph Hills of the nation as ever the spies of Metternich were in Hesse-Darmstadt. I read manuscripts constantly, and not only manuscripts but also many long and bombastic letters from aspirants. The net product of all this diligence and suffering is the firm conviction that there is no other country in the world in which the literary neophyte has so easy a time of it, that the publishers of no other land are one-half so hospitable to half-baked and phosphorescent talent. I simply can't imagine a new work of any genuine merit at all going unpublished in the United States for so long as six months. If there is any such work in existence, then the author thereof has followed an incredible imbecility in trying to market it; he has sent a pornographic novel to Fleming H. Revell, or a biography of Treitschke to Putnam, or an attack upon spook-chasing to Henry Holt. Even so, it has escaped very narrowly. So thoroughly convinced am I of all this that I am tempted to reissue my challenge. What restrains me is the knowledge that the bad authors and bogus geniuses of America are not only stupid, but also petty grafters. More than half of the manuscripts that reached me as a result



of my former defiance were sent in violation of its primary condition. This condition was that each should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope for its return. In order to save a few cents author after author put me to trouble and expense. And only one of all these jitney Bennetts and Conrads thanked me. A good many sent me abusive letters after I had returned their manuscripts, but only one thanked me for my exertions.

## II

### *Letters and the Map*

My examination of this mountain of garbage bore out an observation that I have often made in reading manuscripts for the SMART SET, to wit, that literary skill in the United States is segregated geographically—that there are regions in which it tends to appear, and regions in which it is almost unheard of. One of the latter is the Los Angeles neighborhood. Many more manuscripts come out of Los Angeles every month than out of any other American city of its size—perhaps six or eight times as many. The town seems to swarm with literary aspirants. Every writer of movie scenarios out there is at work upon a novel, and nine-tenths of the fair, frail and fat victims of the local swamis appear to have an itch for the short-story. Perhaps it is because the place is full of half-educated idlers—the wives, widows and daughters of Iowa hog-stuffers, Oklahoma oil-thieves, Wyoming sheep-raisers, and so on. One quickly discerns the note of moony mysticism, by the Wilsonian idealism out of the Chautauqua, in the poetry there manufactured. It is about avatars and poltergeists quite as often as it is about spooning behind the door. But the subject matter of this Los Angeles literature is not what gives it distinction; the thing that genuinely marks it is its infernal badness. Long experience has made me so suspicious of it that I always open a new bale with misgivings, and am seldom disappointed.

The town really enjoys a unique eminence: it houses more bad authors than New York. During the past five years I have read the manuscripts of probably four or five hundred different Los Angeles geniuses, and in the whole number there have not been six of even the most meagre talents. I daresay that the place is full of literary societies, and that these harsh words will cause them to pass resolutions denouncing me as the worst critic that ever lived. If so, I shall induce Dr. Nathan to print a Los Angeles number of this great literary and moral periodical, made up of the first thirty manuscripts that reached me from there after noon of a certain day.

Another literary Alsatia is in the South. The South, of course, is by no means illiterate. On the contrary, it swarms with authors, and many of them are very fecund; there was one, a few years back who sent me a manuscript a day for two or three months. But the quality of the stuff thus produced is simply frightful. Nothing in understandable English could be more windy, more banal, more childish. The bad authors of the North at least choose respectable models: their eyes are on Henry James, or Huysmans, or Whitman, or Dreiser, or even George Moore. But their brethren of the sub-Potomac wilderness are still in the age of Mrs. E. D. N. Southworth; if they have a model, it must be the Julia Magruder of the *Ladies' Home Journal* serials of thirty years ago. Love down there is still a duet for flute and harp; there is no sign that the fictioneers of the region have yet become aware of its new pathological, medico-legal and scandalous aspects, so fiercely studied in Greenwich Village. Perhaps the influence of Sir Walter Scott, which, as Mark Twain was fond of declaring, caused the Civil War, is still raging. For a Southerner to deal with his neighbors realistically, as Masters and Anderson have dealt with theirs in the Middle West and many a scrivening old maid has dealt with hers in New England, would be almost unbelievable. If it is ever done, it will be done by the new school of



Aframerican novelists, now struggling heavily to emerge. A few sound authors, of course, live in the South, just as Dreiser lives in Los Angeles, and Poe once lived in Richmond and even Baltimore. But they are not genuinely Southern; the main stream of Confederate *Kultur* flows around them and takes no color from them. The typical Southern author remains an archaic sentimentalist of the farm-paper variety.

Well, then, where is the good writing that goes on in the Republic done? In New York? Not much of it. New York is the home of literary artisans, not of literary artists. Many of the manufacturers of best-sellers live here, and most of the manufacturers of machine-made stuff for the cheap fiction magazines. But, considering its population, the big town produces very little literature of genuine significance. Compare it to London or Paris, and at once it shrinks to the size of a staphylococcus. Greenwich Village, for all its noisy pretensions, is quite sterile. It has never produced a first-rate poet, or a first-rate novelist, or a critic worth a hoot. Even its drama, in the main, is hollow and imitative; all its little theatres, taken together, have not averaged one good play a year. What the Village lacks, of course, is a civilized culture, with the skepticism that goes therewith. It follows every new craze like the proletariat following a circus parade. I believe, and have often argued, that its influence is for the good. Some of the novelties it embraces are worth examining, and it gives them a chance. Best of all, it keeps a certain bawdiness in letters, which always threaten, in the United States, to become too respectable. But this influence bears its fruits elsewhere. The Village itself has enthusiasm and curiosity, but it lacks ideas, it lacks brains.

Draw a circle of two hundred miles radius around Chicago, and you will enclose four-fifths of the real literature of America—particularly four-fifths of the literature of tomorrow. Draw a circle of a hundred miles around Boston, and you will enclose nearly all the rest. I

seldom read a manuscript from the Boston region that fails to show some touch of civilized feeling, some proof of sound reading, some sense of style. I seldom read a manuscript from the Chicago region that is wholly without ideas. The bean-eaters are urbane, cultivated, sophisticated, somewhat aloof and cold. The hog-skinners are eager, curious, penetrating, iconoclastic, impatient of finesse, close to the ground. Ah, that one could have both groups of qualities! The American Thomas Hardy would be born that day, perhaps even the American Ibsen. My notion is that it would pay to ship forty or fifty head of young New England authors to Chicago, and let them breathe the ozone of the stock-yards; it might electrify them as it electrifies the young peasants of Indiana, Iowa and Illinois, and there would be something in them that was better worth electrifying. The contrary movement produces only decay. William Dean Howells, migrating from the Ohio saleratus belt to Boston and then to New York, was ruined in his literary infancy; he became a model of correctness and ineffectiveness, the perfect colonial. Hamlin Garland was ground to death in the same nickel-plated sausage-machine, and I believe that it also snipped a few schnitzels from Dreiser and from George Ade, both of whom fled westward before it was too late. The young *muzhik* is simply scared to death by the pomp and circumstance of the seaboard Brahmins; their overwhelming manner makes him feel as puny and ineffective as a coroner's physician at a Christian Science revival. But I doubt that the West would have the same paralyzing effect upon immigrants from the East. The latter would at least have the confidence that goes with respectability; it may be true that one learns nothing worth knowing at Harvard or Yale, but one at all events gets a certain assurance. The reaction between this assurance and the startling panorama of life in the heart of America should produce precisely the tingling sense of awareness that is at the bottom of the artistic impulse. The immigrant



would be thrilled and stimulated, but not abashed.

I proceed from the theory to a case: that of Robert Herrick. Herrick is a typical New Englander of the thoroughly Harvardized sub-species—a professor absolutely true to form. I have never had the honor of sitting under him in class, but his occasional discussions of public problems in the *Chicago Tribune* prove that the *Weltanschauung* of the *Boston Transcript* has entered into the very marrow of his bones. Nevertheless, this Cambridge pedagogue, moving to the stockyards, was so shaken up that he began to write novels, and his Eastern culture made some of them very good novels. Henry James would have been vastly improved by a few whiffs from the same stupendous abattoirs. James, finding New England all culture and no soul, decided to escape, but he made the mistake of going in the wrong direction. In London he was in exactly the same situation as a young Westerner in Boston—that is, he was confronted by a culture more solid and assured than his own. It kept him shaky all his life long; it almost kept him fawning, as his letters inconveniently reveal. He died a sort of super-Howells, with a long row of laborious but essentially hollow books behind him. The notion that James was a master mind is confined to the sort of persons who used to regard Browning as the greatest of poets. He was a superb technician, as Joseph Conrad has testified, but his ideas were always timorous; he never overcame his bashfulness in the presence of such superior fauna as the Lord Chancellor, the Master of Pembroke and Mrs. Humphrey Ward. Thus his painful psychologizings, translated into plain English, turn out to be chief mere kittenishness—an arch tickling of the ribs of elderly virgins—the daring of a grandma smoking cigarettes. But I believe that the makings of a genuinely first-rate artist were in James, and that Chicago would have developed him. What he needed was intimate contact with the life of his own country. He was unhappy in New England be-

cause he was an American, and New England, then as now, was simply a sort of outhouse of old England—a Devil's Island of intellectual poor relations, eternally wearing out the English chemises and pantaloons of season before last. A very defective psychologist—like most professional psychologists—he made the blunder of jumping from the frying pan into the fire. The West would have amused, intrigued and finally conquered him. He would have been a greater artist in his own country. . . .

As I say, the Boston vicinage and the Chicago vicinage produce practically all of the decent writing done in America. There are isolated outposts of the enlightenment in a few cities, but not in many. Who could imagine a good book written in Kansas City? Or in Atlanta, Ga.? Or in Cleveland, O.? San Francisco once disputed the primacy of Chicago, but no more. The glamorous color of the town produces a great deal of aesthetic activity, but the climate is so sensuous that it seldom gets very far. The San Franciscans either slide down the well-vaselined chute into the *Saturday Evening Post* or sink into a sort of dilettantism. They lack staying power. Life out there is so gloriously pleasant that the hard rooting and straining and puffing that the fine arts demand is simply impossible. One could not write a fugue in San Francisco. As well try to read Einstein with the band playing, and a gal on one's knee, and a slave squirting one with attar of roses, and another wheeling in a barrel of Pilsner.

### III

#### *A Give-Away*

Six or eight months ago, giving over this space to a review of the current elegies and exultations upon the life and times of the late Major-General Roosevelt, I indulged myself in the doctrine that the departed was an even worse charlatan than his successor in the sacred office—that all of the windy Progressivism, so-called, upon which



his later policy hinged was in direct conflict with his honest beliefs and superstitions—that he was actually not one in favor of democracy at all, but a conscientious advocate of strong centralization, enforced paternalism, the suppression of heterodoxy by the secular arm, and all the rest of the programme of kaiserism. In closing, I denounced his belated horror of Wilhelm as fraudulent, and showed that he had often, in unguarded moments, exposed theories indistinguishable from those unloaded at ceremonial banquets of the Black Husars. All of which, I need not say, brought me a bath of invective from innocent victims of the late Vesuvius. I was branded a liar, an idiot and a slanderer of the dead, and more than one indignant partisan challenged me to come out into the alley and say it again. To this onslaught I replied with a lordly gesture, patiently biding my time.

It came sooner than I expected. Lured to Chicago during the Republican National Convention by a weakness for the obscene, I got, quite unexpectedly, such support for my doctrine that no fair man, I take it, will ever question it hereafter. That support came from the highest of imaginable sources, to wit, from the very bosom of the deceased hero's family. If a man's own folks do not know what is in his mind, then who does? Well, the Roosevelts appeared in Chicago in dense swarms, and made themselves heard in such tones that only the stone-deaf could fail to hear them. And the message that they brought to the faithful? That message was clearly expressed in their choice of candidates. On the one side stood the Hon. Hiram Johnson, of California, the heir of the Roosevelt Progressivism, a life-long enemy of the Interests, an insatiable whooper for the plain people, an ardent believer in democracy in all its forms. On the other side stood Major-General Leonard Wood, shiny in his medals and side-arms, fresh from his labors for Judge Gary at Gary, Ind., frowning his best military frown, issuing his sublime thoughts in military grunts, the very incarnation of jitney kaiserism. The

Roosevelts were unanimously for the General and against Hiram. Not a single sound in favor of any recognizable Progressive doctrine issued from them during all that hellish week. Pausing only for sleep and meals, they yelled for Wood and his knock-'em-down-and-drag-'em-out metaphysic, his ship of stone and sails of lead, his dictatorship of Ivory Soap, his whole programme of *Schrecklichkeit*, from the moment they got to town until the fatal instant (Temperature: 110 Fahrenheit) when the fat woman fainted in the Kansas delegation, and Cabot Lodge began to gurgle and gasp, and half the delegates rose idiotically and tried to swim out, and the numskull Gamaliel was slipped over upon God and man. The Roosevelts, I suspect, contributed a great deal to the defeat of poor Wood. The carrying-on-of-the-torch motive was vastly overdone. Many a hick delegate revolted against being bossed by caricatures of a ghost, on bad paper and from worn-out plates. But the good intent was surely there. No nerve remained unstrained. No ingratiating smile remained unshed. But not a nerve was strained or a smile was shed for Hiram, or for any of the forward-looking notions that he stood for, and that the late Theodore, when votes could be got by it, also stood for. Not a corpuscle was shed for democracy.

#### IV

##### *A Day of Change*

A THOUGHT that pursues me as I go through the new books, and note their depressing sameness, and the heavy lifelessness that gets into so many of them, is, not to put too fine a point upon it, this: that the novel as an art-form, and the conventional short story with it, are sick unto death, and fast getting ripe for the embalmer. What, indeed, could show a more dreadful cyanosis than the slick, well-rounded, smart-alecky *conte* of the O. Henry type—the amplified anecdote adorned with the obvious humor of a burlesque show, or



the even more obvious melodrama of a Broadway problem play? The thing, as the hawkers of drivel for the cheap fiction magazines have mauled it, grows positively painful. The concoction of it becomes a mere technical trick, taught by such professors as Henry Wallace Phillips in ten lessons. It is devoid of character, devoid of genuine wit, devoid of human understanding, and quite out of contact with any recognizable life that men and women lead in the world. The orthodox novel is just as bad: a swollen artificiality, obedient only to its own preposterous laws. The human beings that it presents are distorted and unnatural; it shows them in formalized situations; it fences off their lives into acts and scenes as stiff and incredible as those of Scribe or Sardou. They never show any of the vague mysteriousness that always hangs about real people. They are simply counters in a childish game, characters in a tedious fable.

It is not thus that we see the folks we really know. They do not spring full-blown into our consciousness, and then proceed by clear steps, always in a great glare of light, to a neat and final dénouement. Even a definite and definitive transaction, *e. g.*, a love affair, does not unroll itself before us in reality as it unrolls itself before us in a novel. The thing that commonly interests us in it is not the puerile machinery whereby the young man carries off the girl, but the eternal human enigma as to why he should want to carry her off at all. In brief, life as we actually experience it is largely a series of unanswered questions, whereas the life of conventional fiction is largely a series of ready and unsatisfying answers. The omniscience of the novelist is more than a mere device of his art; it is a proof of his simplicity and stupidity. In genuinely first-rate fiction, even within the old forms, it is always artfully concealed. What pains Joseph Conrad goes to to disclaim it, to leave the matter in shadow, to avoid the smug confidence and garrulity of a novelette-writer! Conrad's instinct here, as always, is sound. He knows that the conventional novel has been re-

duced to an absurdity by dolts, that it is no longer, in any true sense, a work of art, and so he tries to conceal his use of it. At other times he reaches out toward something quite different. "Youth" is surely neither a novel nor a short story, in the accepted sense. It pursues too thin a line to be the one, and it covers too great an area to be the other. But who will deny its stupendous reality and effectiveness? Who will deny that it awakens recognition infinitely more powerfully than the most adept confection of an O. Henry? "Youth," in fact, is scarcely a story at all; it is life-in-little—a vague thing of atmosphere and tiny, shining points; a picture of a shadow moving through shadows; a fiction that takes on the vividness of experience by imitating the contours of experience.

## V

*A Good Novel*

SINCE our last meeting I have encountered very few books that are worth reading. In recoil from such cheap stuff as is in the "Tales of Mystery and Horror" of Maurice Level (*McBride*) and "The Lonely House," of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes (*Doran*) I have gone back to the Conrad of "Typhoon" and tried to forget my trade. In a pompous introduction to the former, H. B. Irving compares the stories of Level to those of Poe, Stevenson, Kipling, Wells and Arthur Machen. It is precisely as if one compared the boob-bumpers of O. Henry to "Heart of Darkness"—almost as if one compared the music of Saint-Saëns to that of Bach. Even worse is the "Windmills" of Gilbert Cannan (*Huebsch*), a collection of satires so appallingly lacking in wit and ingenuity that they are almost grisly. More hopeless drivel is in "Not That It Matters," by A. A. Milne (*Dutton*), a group of thin and pointless essays, the worst sort of windy tosh from third-rate English weeklies. E. V. Lucas' "Adventures and Enthusiasms" (*Doran*) is a great deal better, but one



must be a fanatical Lucasista to enjoy it honestly. Mere whimsicality quickly grows tiresome; here Lucas has nothing new to offer, but simply makes a new soup, ever thinner and thinner, out of the bones of old ideas. Henry P. Davison's "The American Red Cross in the Great War" (*Macmillan*) is "Hamlet" without the ghost. The thing I'd like most to hear from Mr. Davison is why the Red Cross got a copy of the Treaty of Versailles before the United States Senate did, and what use this advance copy was put to, and to whose advantage. On this capital subject he is magnificently silent. There is also nothing about the alleged political activities of the Red Cross, say in Russia. Nor is there anything about the black-jacking methods used to raise the \$283,000,000 yielded by the two Red Cross drives. Altogether, a pussy-footing volume.

Now for two good books, both English. One is "Caliban," by W. L. George (*Harper*), and the other is "The Evolution of an Intellectual," by John Middleton Murry (*Knopf*). The latter ill bears summary; it is a record of the reflections of a man of wide culture and philosophical habit—reflections colored by the fluent movement of world events, but held together and given coherence by a solid body of sound ideas. This Mr. Murry, who is the editor of the *Athenæum*, is a journalist of a variety tragically rare in the United States. He is at once the alert and curious spectator of the human melodrama, and the detached and analytical humanist. His essays show wide knowledge, freedom from all petty rages and credulities, the historical sense, and, above all, a feeling for style. In his reaction to the current scene, of course, there is naturally some depression, for it is impossible to imagine an intelligent man viewing with much satisfaction a world dominated by such disgusting frauds and mountebanks as Lloyd-George, Scheidemann, Trotsky, Wilson, D'Annunzio, Grabski, Venizelos, Millerand and Churchill. But depression is not necessarily pessimism; the disease is recognized, though there

is yet no cure. If it comes, it will come through the enlightened effort of the Murrys, and not through the dishonest gabble of popular phrase-mongers.

In the George novel there is much the same point of view, though George and Murry differ enormously otherwise. Superficially, "Caliban" is the story of an English yellow journalist, a sort of super-Northcliffe. At bottom, it is a study of the ways and means of inflaming the boobery under democracy, a full-length and devastating examination of the intolerably infamous devices whereby public opinion is manufactured. It is commonly assumed that this business is always pursued for ulterior ends; that the mob-master is always either a financier trying to rob his followers or a politician trying to get office out of them. But that is not always true. The motive is often simply a bald desire for power, a plain yearning to set the idiots to whooping. George's Richard Bulmer is so moved. Money he disdains, and office he prudently evades; what inspires him is merely an hysterical sort of thirst to make a sensation, a half-insane passion to make and break, to bind and loose. He has no politics, no philosophy, no intelligible concept of national destiny, no curiosity as to fundamentals; he simply roars and rages on the surface like a bad boy, dismissing all sense of moral responsibility as a weakness and every ideal as an affectation. The man is brilliantly conceived, and splendidly painted. His story makes the best novel that George has ever done—better than "Blind Alley," even better than "The Making of an Englishman." It makes his position wholly secure among contemporary English novelists of the first rank. But it is more engrossing as a social document than as a novel, for the real drama in it, after all, is not the drama of Bulmer but the drama of English democracy. Better than any sober history that I know of, it unveils the forces that lie behind the conduct of great affairs in the Empire, and in our own Republic no less. It is a positively appalling picture of the government of jackasses by jackals.



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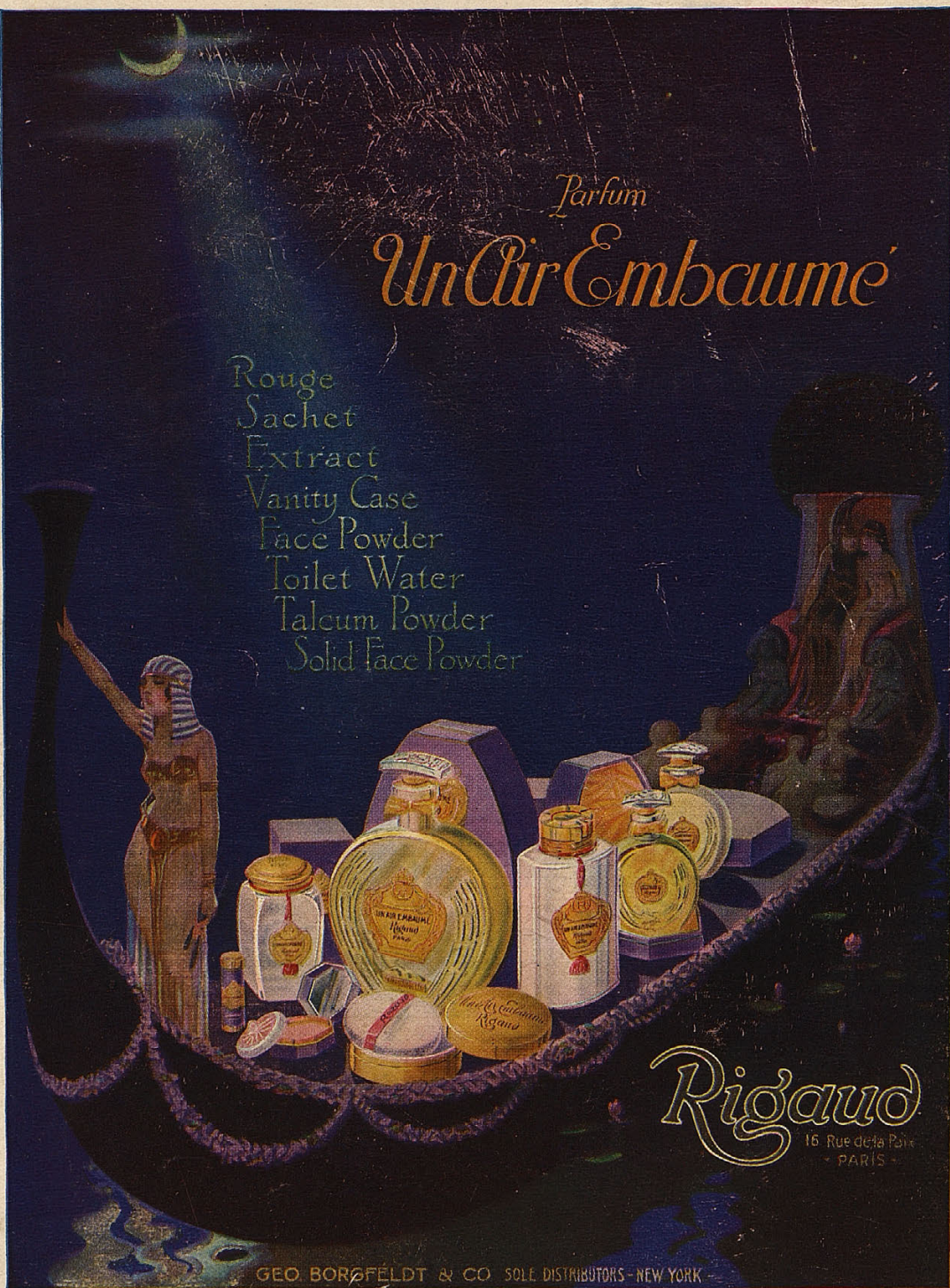
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